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THE

WORKS

OF THE

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VOLUME V.

BRISTOL:

Printed by WILLIAM PINE, in *Wine-Street.*

MDCCLXXI.

Div. S. RBR
208.1 E-6B
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An Extract from Mr. LAW's

TREATISE

On CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

CHAP. VI.

Christians are called to a constant state of prayer and devotion?

I. IT is one principal article of our religion to believe that our blessed Saviour is now at the right hand of God, there making *perpetual intercession* for us, till the redemption of mankind is finished. Prayer therefore is undoubtedly a proper means of drawing near to God; since he who has conquered sin and death, who is Lord of all, is yet as the *great advocate* for sinners, obliged to make perpetual intercession for them.

Whenever therefore we are in the spirit of prayer; when our hearts are lifted up to God, breathing out holy petitions to the throne of grace, we have this encouragement to be *constant* and *fervent* in it, that we are then joining with an intercession at the right hand of God, and doing that for ourselves on earth which our blessed Saviour is perpetually doing for us in heaven. This reason

of prayer is perhaps not much conſidered; yet it certainly contains a moſt powerful motive to it. For who that conſiders his redemption as now carrying on by an *interceſſion* in heaven, can think himſelf ſo rightly employed as when the conſtancy of his own prayers bear ſome reſemblance to that never-ceaſing interceſſion which is made above? This ſhews us alſo, that we are moſt of all to deſire thoſe prayers which are offered up at the *altar*, where the body and blood of Chriſt are joined with them. For as our prayers are only acceptable to God through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt; ſo we may be ſure it is the moſt prevailing prayer, when we thus pray in the name of *Chriſt*, and plead his merits in the *higheſt manner* we can.

II. Devotion may be conſidered either as an exerciſe of public or private prayers at ſet times and occaſions; or as a temper of the mind, a ſtate and diſpoſition of the heart, which is rightly affected with ſuch exerciſes. Now external acts of devotion, are like other external actions, very liable to falſeneſs, and are only ſo far good as they proceed from a right diſpoſition of heart. Zealous profeſſions of *friendſhip* are but hypocriſy, unleſs there be an equal zeal in the heart; and ſo ſolemn prayers are but repeated hypocriſies, unleſs the heart be *conformable* to them. Since therefore it is the heart only that is devout, I ſhall conſider devotion chiefly in this reſpect,

ſpect, as it is a *ſtate* and *temper* of heart; for it is in this ſenſe only that *Chriſtians* are called to a *conſtant ſtate* of devotion. They are not to be always upon their knees; but they are to be always in the ſtate of devotion.

III. * Friendſhip does not require us to be always waiting upon our friends in external ſervices; theſe offices have their times of intermiſſion; it is only the ſervice of the heart that is never to intermit. This is not to begin and end, as external ſervices do; but to perſevere like the motion of our heart, or the beating of our pulſe. It is juſt ſo in devotion; *prayers* have their *hours*, their beginning and ending, but that turn of mind, that diſpoſition of the heart towards God, which is the life and ſpirit of prayer, is to be as conſtant and laſting as our own life and ſpirit.

* The repeating of a *creed* at certain times is an act of faith; but that faith, which *overcometh* the *world*, ſtays neither for times nor ſeaſons, but is a living principle of the ſoul, that is always believing, truſting and depending upon God. In the ſame manner verbal prayers are acts of devotion; but that prayer which openeth the gates of heaven, ſtops not at *forms* and *manuals* of devotion; but is a language of the ſoul, which worſhips, adores, and delights in God, at all times and ſeaſons.

The reaſon of prayer, like all other duties of piety, is founded in the nature of God, and

the nature of man. It is founded in the nature of God, as he is the fole fountain of all happineſs; it is founded in the nature of man, as he is weak and helpleſs, and full of wants. So that prayer is an *earneſt application, or aſcent of the heart to* God, *as to the ſole cauſe of all happineſs.* He therefore that moſt truly feels the miſery, corruption, and weakneſs of his own nature; who is moſt fully convinced that a relief from all theſe diſorders, and a true happineſs, is to be found in God alone; he who is moſt fully convinced of theſe two truths, is moſt fully poſſeſſed of the ſpirit of prayer.

IV. * Hence we may perceive why people of *learning*, and great *application* to *books*, who ſeem to have retired from the corruptions of the world, are yet often not devout. The reaſon is, becauſe devotion imparts a full ſenſe of the vanity and littleneſs of *every thing* but God; whereas it is often the *ſame vanity* that wears out ſcholars in their *ſtudies*, and other people at *court*, in the *camp*, or at *ſea*. They do not want to be *merchants*, or *colonels*, or *ſecretaries of ſtate*; but they want to be critics, grammarians and hiſtorians. They, it may be, diſregard riches and equipage; deſpiſe the ſports and diverſions of the *preſent age*; but then it is to contemplate the *riches* and *equipage*, the ſports and diverſions of the ancient *Romans*.

The

The vanity of ſome *ladies* and *gentlemen* would be touched, if you ſhould tell them that that they did not underſtand *dreſs:* ſome great *ſcholars* would be more dejected, if you ſhould ſuppoſe them ignorant of a *fold* in the *Roman garments.*

The *bulk* of mankind are ſo dull and taſteleſs, and illiterate, as to ſet their hearts upon *current coin.* But great learning has raiſed ſome men above this vulgar groſſneſs of taſte. Their heart does not beat but at the ſight of a *medal,* or an ancient coin. And they are only afraid of dying before they have out-done the world for their collections of *ſhells, ſkins, ſtones, flies,* and *inſects.*

V. * When men retire into their ſtudies to *change* their nature; to *correct* and *reform* their paſſions; to find out the folly, the falſeneſs, the corruption and weakneſs of their hearts; to penetrate into the vanity and emptineſs of all worldly attainments; when they read and meditate, to fill their ſouls with heavenly affections, and to raiſe their hearts unto God; when this is *learning,* (and what elſe deſerves the name?) then learning will lead men unto God; then learned men will be devout, and great *ſcholars* will be great *ſaints.*

VI. Many people are thus far ſincere in their devotions, that they would be glad to pray devoutly; they ſtrive to be fervent, but never attain to it, becauſe they never took the only poſ-

ſible way. They never thought of altering their lives, or of living different from the reſt of the world; but hope to be devout merely by reading over books of devotion: which is as odd a fancy, as if a man ſhould expect to be happy, by reading diſcourſes upon happineſs. When theſe people dare take Chriſtianity, as it is offered to them in the goſpel; when they deny themſelves, and renounce the world, they then will have begun devotion.

Trebonius aſks how often he ſhall pray? He thinks the nicety of the queſtion ſhews the *piety* of his heart. But *Trebonius* is deceived, for the queſtion proves, that he is a ſtranger to devotion. *Trebonius* has a friend; he is conſtantly viſiting him; he is never well out of his company. If he is abſent, letters are ſent at all opportunities. Now what is the reaſon that he never aſks how often he ſhall viſit, how often he ſhall delight in, how often he ſhall write to his friend? It is becauſe his friend has his heart, and his heart is his faithful and ſufficient inſtructor. When *Trebonius* has given his heart to God, he will have done aſking how often he ſhall pray.

Julius goes to prayers; he confeſſes himſelf to be a miſerable ſinner; he accuſes himſelf to God with all the aggravations that can be, as having no *health* in him. Yet *Julius* cannot bear to be informed of any imperfection, or ſuſpected to be wanting in any degree of virtue.

Now,

Now, can there be a ſtronger proof, that *Julius* is wanting in the ſincerity of his devotions? Is not this a plain ſign, that his confeſſions to God are only words of *courſe*, an humble *civility* of ſpeech to his Maker, in which his heart had no ſhare?

If a man was to confeſs that his *eyes* were bad, his hands weak, his feet feeble, and his body helpleſs; he would not be angry with thoſe that ſuppoſed he was not in perfect ſtrength. Yet *Julius* confeſſes himſelf to be in great weakneſs, corruption, diſorder, and infirmity; and yet is angry at any one that does but ſuppoſe him defective in any virtue. Is it not the ſame thing, as if he had ſaid "you muſt not imagine that "I am in earneſt in my devotions?"

VII. To live in true devotion, we muſt daily conſider the end and hope of our calling, that all worldly paſſions and deſires may be ſwallowed up in one great deſire of future glory. This devotion to God is ſignified in ſcripture, by living *by faith and not by ſight*, when the inviſible things of the other life, are the reaſon, the motive, and the meaſure of all our deſires and tempers. And thoſe who thus tend to God in all their motion and deſires, are devout every where. This makes their common actions acts of religion, and turns every place into a *chapel*. And it is to this devotion we are all called, not only

by particular precepts, but by the whole nature and tenour of our religion.

VIII. Now, as all ſtates and tempers of the mind muſt be ſupported by actions and exerciſes ſuitable to them; ſo devotion, which is an earneſt application of the ſoul to God, as its only happineſs, muſt be ſupported and kept alive by actions and exerciſes ſuitable to it. The devotion of the heart diſpoſes us to obſerve ſet times of prayer; and, on the other hand, ſet times of prayer increaſe and enliven the devotion of the heart. It is thus in all other caſes: habits of the mind diſpoſe us to actions ſuitable to them; and theſe actions ſtrengthen and improve the habits from whence they proceed.

* It is the habitual taſte for *muſic* that carries people to *concerts*; and again, it is *concerts* that increaſe the habitual love of *muſic*: ſo it is the right diſpoſition of the heart towards God that leads people to outward acts of prayer; and, on the other ſide, outward acts of prayer preſerve and ſtrengthen the right diſpoſition of the heart towards God. As therefore we are to judge of the ſignificancy of our prayers, by looking to the ſtate and temper of our heart; ſo are we alſo to judge of the ſtate of our heart by the *frequency*, *conſtancy*, and *importunity* of our prayers. For as we are ſure that our prayers are inſignificant, unleſs they proceed from a right heart;

ſo

ſo unleſs our prayers be *frequent*, *conſtant*, and full of *importunity*, we may be ſure our heart is not right towards God.

IX. Our bleſſed Saviour has indeed condemned one ſort of long prayer. *But, when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions, as the Heathens do; for they think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking* †. But it is not *length*, or a *continuance* of prayer that is here forbid; but *vain repetitions*. Nor are the *Heathens* here condemned for being *importunate*, and *perſevering* in prayer; but for a *wrong judgment*, in that they thought they were heard, becauſe they *ſpoke much*; that is, often repeated the ſame words. So that all that Chriſtians are here forbid, is this, to think that the *efficacy* of prayer conſiſts in vain and long repetitions; yet ſome imagine, that a *continuance* of prayer is here reproved, and thence conclude, that ſhortneſs is a neceſſary qualification of prayer.

But how willing muſt people be to be deceived, before they can reaſon in this manner? For the words have plainly no relation to *length* or *ſhortneſs* of prayer. They no more condemn the one than the other. They only condemn an opinion of the *Heathens*, that the excellency of prayer conſiſted in a multitude of repetitions. Now, to think that ſhort prayer is better, becauſe it is *ſhort*, is the ſame error as to hold with

† Matt. vi. 7.

the *Heathens*, that it is better becauſe it is often repeated. It is the ſame miſtake in the nature of devotion.

X. But ſuppoſing the meaning of theſe words was obſcure (which it is not) yet ſurely it is plain enough, that our Saviour has elſewhere expreſly recommended a *continuance* and *importunity* in prayer. And how perverſely do they read the goſpel, who can find this authority againſt ſuch kind of devotion! For can he who was ſo often retiring to *deſerts*, to *mountains*, to *ſolitary* places to pray, who ſpent *whole nights* in prayer; can he be ſuppoſed to have left a reproof of thoſe who ſhould follow his example? But beſides his example, his doctrine is on no point more plain and certain. *He ſpake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.* And it is plain to any one that reads it, that it has no other intent but to recommend *continuance* and *importunity* in prayer. The widow is relieved; not becauſe ſhe aſked relief, but becauſe ſhe *continued* aſking it: And God is ſaid to avenge his elect; not becauſe they cry to him now and then, but becauſe they *cry day and night.* Our bleſſed Saviour teacheth the ſame doctrine in another parable, of a perſon going to his friend to borrow *three loaves* at midnight, which he concludes thus: *I ſay unto you, though he would not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend; yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him*

him as many as he needeth. Here again the ſole ſcope of the paſſage is to ſhew the efficacy of continuance and importunity in prayer.

XI. *Clito* ſays he deſires no more time for riſing, dreſſing, and ſaying his prayers, than a quarter of an hour. He tells this to his friends; not to ſhew his want of religion, but that he may be thought to underſtand devotion. You tell him that our Saviour's parables teach *continuance* and *importunity* in *prayer*; that the apoſtles exhort to pray *without ceaſing*, to pray *always*; and that devout perſons are recorded in ſcripture as praying *night and day*. Still *Clito* is for ſhort prayers. He at laſt finds a text of ſcripture, and appeals to the example of the *angels*; they only ſaid, *Glory be to* God *on high, and on earth peace, good-will towards men. Clito* takes this to be an argument for ſhort prayer, becauſe the angels had done ſo ſoon. But *Clito* muſt be told, that this is no prayer at all; it is only a joyful proclamation to men. And ſurely the manner of *angels* ſpeaking to men, can be no rule or meaſure of men's ſpeaking to God. The angels had no more to tell the world than this meſſage of joy; but does it therefore follow, that ſinners are to be as ſhort in their addreſſes to God? If *Clito* muſt have an example from heaven, he might have found one much more proper than this, where it is ſaid, *That they reſt not day and night, ſaying, holy, holy, holy, Lord*

Lord God *Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come* †.

XII. There are *two ſeaſons* of our hearts which we ſhould careſully obſerve: I mean the *time* when we are *moſt affected* with our devotions, and the *time* when we are *moſt indiſpoſed* to pray. For both theſe might equally ſerve to inſtruct us in the knowledge of ourſelves, and how to govern the motions of our hearts.

* Reflect with yourſelf, how it was with you; what circumſtance you was in; what had *happened* to you; what you had been *doing*; when you found yourſelf *ſo affected* with your devotions. Now, if you find out what ſtate you was then in, when you was diſpoſed to pray ſo fervently, then you have found out a way of raiſing your devotion at another time. If you was then to put down in *writing* ſome ſhort remembrance of the *chief things* that raiſed your heart, ſo that you might have a view of them as often as your mind wanted ſuch aſſiſtance, you would find a benefit that would reward your labour. On the contrary, whenever you have found yourſelf *very much indiſpoſed* for prayer, reflect with yourſelf, what *ſtate* you was then in; what had *happened* unto you; what *thoughts* you had in your head; what *paſſions* were then awakened; what you had been *doing*, or were *intending* to do: for when you have found out the ſtate you was then

† Rev. iv. 8.

then in, you have found out the hindrances of your devotion; and know what things to avoid, if you desire not to quench the Spirit.

XIII. If you was here again to make short remembrances in *writing*, of the chief things which rendered you indispos'd for prayer, and frequently to read and reflect upon them, you would have a faithful information of what you are most to avoid. If you find that *impertinent visits*, *foolish conversation*, or a day idly spent in *civil compliances* with other people, have rendered your mind *dull* and *indispos'd*, and less *affected* with devotion, then you will have found that impertinent visits, and ceremonious compliances in spending our time, are not *little indifferent* things; but are to be daily watched and guarded against by all those who desire to be daily alive unto God.

XIV. They who are for short prayers, because God does not *need* much intreaty, ought also to shew, that man does not need much prayer; does not *need* that strength, and light, and help, which arises from *much praying*. For unless this be the state of our hearts, we shall want much prayer to *move* and *awake* ourselves; how little soever we suppose necessary to *excite* the goodness of God. If therefore men would consider prayer, not only as it is an *invocation* of God, but also as it is an *exercise of holy thoughts*; as it is an endeavour

endeavour to *feel* and be affected with the great truths of religion, they would soon see, that tho' God is so good as not to *need* much calling upon; yet that man is so weak as to need much assistance, and to be under a constant necessity of that help, and light, and improvement which arises from praying much. When therefore we would know how much we ought to pray, we must consider how much our hearts want to be altered, and remember that the great work of prayer is, to work upon ourselves; it is not to *move* and affect God, but it is to move and affect our own hearts, and fill them with such tempers as God delights to reward.

XV. * Now prayer never so corrects and amends the heart as when we extend it to all the *particulars* of our state, enumerating all our wants, infirmities, and disorders; not because God needs to be informed of them, but because by this means we inform ourselves, and make our hearts in the best manner acquainted with our true condition. When our prayers thus descend to all the circumstances of our condition, they become a faithful glass to us; and so often as we pray, so often we see ourselves in a true light.

Don't be content therefore with confessing yourself to be a *sinner*, or with praying against sin in *general*: for this will but a little affect your mind; it will only shew you to yourself in such a state as all mankind are in: but if you find yourself

yourſelf out; if you confeſs and lay open the guilt of your own *particular ſins*; if you pray conſtantly againſt ſuch particular ſins as you find yourſelf moſt ſubject to, the *frequent ſight* of your own ſins, and your *conſtant deploring* of their guilt, will give your prayers entrance into your hearts, and put you upon meaſures how to amend.

If you confeſs yourſelf only to be a *ſinner*, you confeſs yourſelf to be a *man*; but when you deſcribe and confeſs your *own particular* guilt, then you find cauſe for your own *particular ſorrow*; then you give your prayers all the power they can have to affect and wound your heart. In like manner, when you pray for God's grace, don't be ſatisfied with a general petition, but make your prayers ſuitable to your defects; and continue to aſk for ſuch gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit as you find yourſelf moſt defective in: for this will give life to your petitions, and make your heart go along with them.

XVI. Laſtly, this particularity in our prayers is the greateſt trial of the *truth* of our hearts. A man perhaps thinks he prays for humility, becauſe he has the word *humility* in his prayers; but if he was to branch out humility into all its *particular parts*, he would perhaps find himſelf not diſpoſed to pray for them. If he was to repreſent to himſelf the ſeveral particulars which make a man *poor in ſpirit*, he would find his heart

heart not desirous of them. So that the only way to know our hearts, and whether we really pray for any virtue, is to have all its parts in our prayers, and to ask for it in all its instances. If the *proud* man was to pray daily for humility in all its kinds, and to beg of God to remove him from all occasions of *such pride*, as is common to his *particular state*, and to disappoint him in all his attempts that were contrary to humility, he would find that such prayers would either conquer his pride, or his pride would put an end to his prayers. For it would be impossible to live long in any instances of pride, if his daily and frequent prayers were petitions against those particular instances.

XVII. Let me now only add this one word more, that he who has learned *to pray*, has learned the greatest secret of a holy and happy life. Which way soever else we let loose our hearts, they will return unto us again *empty* and *weary*. Time will convince the *vainest* and *blindest* minds, that happiness is no more to be found in the things of this world, than it is to be dug out of the earth. But when the motions of our hearts are motions of piety, tending to God in constant acts of devotion, then have we found rest unto our souls; then is it that we have conquered the misery of our nature: and neither love nor desire in vain: then is it that we have found out a good that is equal to all our wants:

that

that is, a conſtant ſource of comfort and refreſhment, that will fill us with peace and joyful expectations here, and eternal happineſs hereafter. For he that lives in the ſpirit of devotion, whoſe heart is always full of God, lives at the *top* of human happineſs, and is the fartheſt from all the vanities and vexations which diſturb the minds of men devoted to the world.

CHAP. VII.

All Chriſtians are required to imitate the life and example of Jeſus Chriſt.

I. OUR religion teaches us, that as we have *borne the image of the earthly, ſo we ſhall bear the image of the heavenly*; that after our death we ſhall riſe to a ſtate of life and happineſs, like to that life and happineſs which our bleſſed Saviour enjoys at the right hand of God. Since therefore we are to be fellow-heirs with Chriſt, it is not to be wondered at, that we are to be like Chriſt in this life, that we may enter into that ſtate of happineſs which he enjoys in the kingdom of heaven.

II. Not that we are called to the ſame outward manner of life with his; but to the ſame ſpirit and temper, which was the ſpirit and temper of our bleſſed Saviour. We are to be like him in heart,

heart, to act by the *same rule*, to look towards the *same end*, and to govern our lives by the *same spirit*. This is an imitation of Jesus Christ which is as necessary to salvation as it is to believe in his name. This is the sole end of all the doctrines of Christ, to make us like himself, to fill us with his *spirit* and *temper*, and make us live according to the rule and manner of his life. As no doctrines are true, but such as are according to the doctrines of Christ, so no life is right, but such as is according to the life of Christ. For he lived as infallibly as he taught; and it is as wrong to vary from his example, as from his doctrines. To live as he lived, is as certainly the one way of living as we ought, as to believe as he taught is the one way of believing as we ought. There is no other way besides this; nothing can possibly bring us to God in heaven, unless we are now one with Christ, and walk as he also walked. For we may as well expect to go to a heaven where Christ is not, as to go to that where he is, without his spirit and temper. If Christians would but suffer themselves to reflect upon this, their own minds would soon convince them of it. For who can find the least reason, why he should not imitate the life of Christ? Or why Christians should think of any other rule of life? It would be as easy to shew that Christ acted amiss, as that we need not act after his example.

III. If

III. If it ſhould be ſaid, that Jeſus was the *Saviour* of the world, that he was born to redeem mankind, and was the *Son of* God. It may be anſwered, that this does not make the life of Chriſt to be leſs the *rule* and *model* of all Chriſtians. For, as I obſerved before, it is the ſpirit and *temper* of Chriſt that all Chriſtians are to imitate; they are to do their *proper work* in that ſpirit and temper, in which Chriſt did the work on which he was ſent. So that although Chriſtians are not redeemers of the world, as he was; though they have not that great work to finiſh which he had; yet they have *their* work to do in the manner that he had *his*; they have their part to act, which though it be a different part, muſt not be performed with a different ſpirit; but with ſuch obedience to God, ſuch regard to his glory, and all ſuch holy diſpoſitions, as our bleſſed Saviour manifeſted in every part of his life.

IV. The bleſſed Jeſus came into the world to ſave the world. Now we muſt enter into this ſame deſign, and make *ſalvation* the buſineſs of our lives. And though we cannot contribute towards it like him, yet we muſt contribute all that we can, and make the ſalvation of ourſelves and others the one care of our lives.

The *poor widow's mites* were but a ſmall matter in themſelves, yet as they were the utmoſt ſhe could give, our bleſſed Saviour ſet them above the

the larger contributions of the rich. This may encourage people in every ſtate of life to be contented with their *capacity* of doing good, provided they act up to it. Let no one think that he is too low, too mean and private to follow his Lord in the ſalvation of ſouls. Let him but add his mite, and if it be all that he hath, he ſhall be thought to have done much. Not that all are to be preachers and teachers of religion, no more than all are to be *apoſtles*, or all *prophets*, or all *workers of miracles*. Chriſtians are like members of one and the ſame body; they are as different from one another, as hands and eyes, and have as different offices; yet may their different parts promote the ſame common end. As *the eye cannot ſay to the hand, I have no need of thee*; *nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you* †; ſo neither can the learned teacher ſay he hath no need of the private, unlearned perſon. For the work of ſalvation is carried on by all hands, as well by him that is taught, as by him that teacheth. An *unlearned* perſon, by being deſirous of inſtruction, and careful to comply with it, may promote ſalvation as truly, in a degree, as he that is able and willing to inſtruct. This teachable diſpoſition may as effectually influence others as another man's ability and care of teaching. Therefore, though, as the apoſtle ſaith, all have *not the gift of healing*, though all do not *ſpeak with tongues*, yet all have *ſome part* that

† 1 Cor. xii. 2.

that they may act in the salvation of mankind, and may follow their Lord and Master in the great work, for which he came down from heaven: we must not then think, that it is the business of *clergymen* only to carry on the work of salvation; but must remember, that we are engaged in the same business, though not in the same manner.

V. Had the *poor widow* thought herself excused from taking care of the treasury; had she thought it belonged only to the *rich* to contribute to it, she had lost that great commendation which our Saviour bestowed upon her. Now, it may be that some widows are so very poor, as not to have so much as a *mite* to give to the treasury, who must therefore content themselves with the charity of their hearts; but this can never happen in the business of salvation. Here no one can be so poor, as not to have a *mite* to contribute towards it. For no circumstances of life can hinder us from being *examples* of piety, and making our lives a *lesson* of instruction to all that are about us. And he that lives an exemplary life though his state be ever so *poor* and *mean*, is largely contributing to the salvation of others, and proving himself the *best* follower of his Lord and Master.

VI. This therefore is the first great instance in which we are to follow the example and spirit

rit of our bleſſed Saviour. He came to ſave the world: we muſt all conſider ourſelves as called to carry on this *great work*. For how can we think ourſelves to be his *followers*, if we do not follow him in that for which he came into the world? How can we be like the Saviour of the world, unleſs the *ſalvation* of the world be our conſtant care? We cannot ſave the world as he ſaved it, but we can contribute our mite towards it. *How knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thine huſband? Or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy wife* †? This ſhews plainly, that *all perſons* may have a ſhare in the ſalvation of thoſe that are near them, and that they are to conſider themſelves as expreſly called to this great work. For the apoſtle uſes it as the ſame argument both to huſband and wife; which ſuppoſes that it is a buſineſs in which one is as much concerned as the other. The *woman* we know is not allowed to ſpeak in the *church*, yet is ſhe entruſted with *ſome ſhare* in the ſalvation of the world; ſhe is ſuppoſed equally capable of ſaving the huſband, as the huſband of ſaving the wife. Now what is here ſaid of huſband and wife, we muſt extend to every *ſtate* and relation; *brothers* and *ſiſters*, *friends* and *neighbours*, muſt all conſider themſelves as called to the ſalvation of one another. How knoweſt thou, O *ſiſter*, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy *brother*? How knoweſt thou, O *man*,

† 1 Cor. vii. 16.

O *man*, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy *neighbour?* Is a way of thinking that ought never to be out of our minds. For this would make brothers and ſiſters bear with one another, if they conſider, that they are to do that for one another which Chriſt hath done for the whole world. This reflection would turn our anger toward bad relations into care and tenderneſs for their ſouls; we ſhould not be glad to get away from them, but give them more of our company, and be more exact in our behaviour towards them; always ſuppoſing it poſſible, that our *good converſation* may ſome time or other affect them, and that God may make uſe of us as a means of their ſalvation.

VII. * *Eutropius* is very good and pious himſelf; but then his fault is, that he ſeeks only the converſation of pious and good people. He is careful and exact in his behaviour towards his virtuous friends; always ſtudying to oblige them; but gets away from and avoids thoſe that are of another temper. Now *Eutropius* ſhould recollect, that this is acting like a *phyſician* that would take care of the *healthy*, and diſregard thoſe that are *ſick*. He ſhould remember, that his irreligious friends and relations are the very perſons that are fallen to his care; and that he is as directly called to take care of their ſalvation, as the huſband to take care of the unbelieving wife. *Eutropius* therefore, if he would

imitate his Lord and Maſter, muſt apply to the *loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael*, and endeavour by all the innocent arts of pleaſing his friends, to gain them to repentance. We muſt not excuſe ourſelves from this care, by ſaying that our relations are obſtinate, hardened, and careleſs; but muſt ſupport ourſelves with the apoſtle's argument, How knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou mayſt not at laſt ſave thy relation?

VIII. The apoſtle ſaith, *deſtroy not him with thy meat, for whom Chriſt died* †. We may therefore juſtly reaſon thus, that as it lies much in our power to hinder the ſalvation, ſo it muſt, to promote the ſalvation of thoſe for whom Chriſt died. Deſtroy not therefore by thy negligence, by thy impatience, by thy want of care, that relation for whom Chriſt died; nor think that thou haſt done enough, till there is no more that thou canſt do. This is the ſtate in which all Chriſtians are appointed by God in their ſeveral ſtations; to carry on that great work, for which Chriſt came into the world. *Clergymen* are not the only men that have a *cure* of ſouls, but every Chriſtian has ſome people about him, whoſe ſalvation he is obliged to be careful of; with whom he is to live in all godlineſs and purity, that they may have the benefit of his example and aſſiſtance in their duty to God. So that all Chriſtians, though ever ſo *low*,

† Rom. xiv. 15.

low, and *mean*, and *private*, muſt conſider themſelves as *hired* by Chriſt to work in his vineyard; for as no circumſtances of life can hinder us from ſaving ourſelves, ſo neither can they hinder us from promoting the ſalvation of others. And though we have, according to our different ſtations, different parts to act; yet if we are careful of that part which is fallen to our ſhare, we are equally objects of God's favour.

Thou, it may be, art not a *prophet*; God has not honoured thee with this poſt in his ſervice; yet needeſt thou not fall ſhort of this happineſs: for our Saviour hath ſaid, *He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, ſhall receive a prophet's reward.* Now this ſhews us, that though all men have not the ſame part to act in the common ſalvation, yet none will be loſers by that ſtate they are in, if they be but true to the particular duties of it. If they do all the good they can in their *particular ſtate*, they will be looked upon with ſuch acceptance as the *poor widow* that gave all that ſhe had.

IX. * Hence we may learn the greatneſs of their folly, who, neglecting the exact performance of ſuch duties as fall within their power, are pleaſing themſelves with the great things they would do, were they but in another ſtate.

Clemens has his head full of imaginary piety. He is often propoſing to himſelf what he would do if he had a great eſtate. He would outdo

all charitable men that are gone before him: he would retire from the world; he would have no equipage; he would allow himself only neceſſaries, that widows and orphans, the ſick and diſtreſſed, might find relief out of his eſtate. He tells you, that all other ways of ſpending an eſtate is folly and madneſs.

Now *Clemens* has at preſent a moderate eſtate, which he ſpends upon himſelf, in the ſame vanities and indulgences as other people do. He might live upon one third of his fortune, and make the reſt the ſupport of the poor; but he does nothing of all this that is in his power, but pleaſes himſelf with what he would do if his power was greater. Come to thy ſenſes, *Clemens*; do not talk what thou wouldeſt do, if thou waſt an *angel*, but conſider what thou canſt do, as thou art a *man*. Make the beſt uſe of thy *preſent ſtate*; do now as thou thinkeſt thou wouldeſt do with a great eſtate; be *ſparing*, *deny* thyſelf, abſtain from all vanities, that the poor may be better maintained, and then thou art as charitable as thou canſt be in any eſtate. Remember the poor *widow's mite*.

Fervidus is exact in the duties of religion; but then the greatneſs of his zeal to be doing things that he cannot, makes him overlook thoſe little ways of doing good which are every day in his power. *Fervidus* is only ſorry that he is not in holy orders, and that his life is not ſpent in a buſineſs the moſt deſirable of all

all things in the world. He is often thinking what reformation he would make in the world, if he was a *prieſt* or a *biſhop*; he would have devoted himſelf wholly to God and religion, and have had no other care but how to ſave ſouls. But do not believe yourſelf, *Fervidus*; for if you deſired in earneſt to be a *clergyman*, that you might devote yourſelf entirely to the ſalvation of others, why are you not doing all you can in the ſtate you are now in? Would you take extraordinary care of a *pariſh*, or a *dioceſe*, why then are you not as extraordinary in the care of a family? If you think the care of other peoples ſalvation to be the happieſt buſineſs in the world, why do you neglect the care of thoſe that are fallen into your hands? Why do you ſhew no concern for the ſouls of your ſervants? If they do their buſineſs for which you hired them, you never trouble your head about their Chriſtianity. Nay, *Fervidus*, you are ſo far from labouring to make thoſe that are about you truly devout and holy, that you almoſt put it out of their power to be ſo. You hire a *coachman* to carry you to church, and to ſit in the ſtreet with your *horſes*, whilſt you are attending divine ſervice. You never aſk him how he ſupplies the loſs of divine ſervice, or what means he takes to preſerve himſelf in a ſtate of piety. You imagine that if you was a *clergyman*, you would be ready to lay down your life for your flock; yet you cannot lay aſide a *little eſtate* to promote

the salvation of your servants. It is not desired of you, *Fervidus*, to die a *martyr* for your brethren; you are only required to go to *church* on foot, to spare some *state* and *attendance*, to bear sometimes with a little *rain* and *dirt*, rather than keep those souls which are as dear to God and Christ as yours is, from their *full share* in the common worship of Christians. Do but deny yourself such small matters as these; let us but see that you can take the least trouble to make all your servants and dependants true servants of God, then you shall be allowed to imagine what good you would have done had you been devoted to the altar.

X. **Eugenia* is a young woman, full of pious dispositions; she is intending, if ever she has a family, to be the *best mistress* of it that ever was; her house shall be a *school* of religion, and her children and servants shall be brought up in the strictest piety; she will spend her time, and live in a very different manner from the rest of the world. It may be so, *Eugenia*; you think you intend all this: but you are not yet at the head of a family, and perhaps never may be. But *Eugenia*, you have now one maid, and you do not know what religion she is of; she dresses you for the church; you ask her for what you want, and then leave her to have as little Christianity as she pleases. You turn her away; you hire another; she comes, and goes, no more instructed

inſtructed, or edified in religion, by living with you than if ſhe had lived with any body elſe. And this comes to paſs, becauſe your mind is taken up with greater things, and you reſerve yourſelf to make a whole family religious, if ever you come to be head of it. You need not ſtay, *Eugenia*, to be ſo extraordinary a perſon; the opportunity is now in your hands; you may now ſpend your time, and live in as different a manner from the reſt of the world, as ever you can in any other ſtate. Your *maid* is your family at preſent; ſhe is under your care; be now that religious governeſs that you intend to be; teach her the *catechiſm*, hear her read, exhort her to pray, take her with you to church, perſuade her to love the divine ſervice as you love it; and ſpare no pains to make her as devout as yourſelf. When you do thus much good in your preſent ſtate, then you are that extraordinary perſon you intend to be; and till you thus live up to your preſent ſtate, there is but little hopes that the altering your ſtate will alter your way of life.

XI. * There is no falſeneſs of our hearts that leads us into greater errors, than imagining, that we ſhall ſome time or other be better than we are, or need be now: for *perfection* has no dependance upon *external* circumſtances; it wants no *times* or *opportunities*; but is then in its higheſt ſtate, when we are making the *beſt uſe*

of that condition in which we are placed. The *poor widow* did not ſtay till ſhe was *rich* before ſhe contributed to the treaſury; ſhe readily brought her mite; and, little as it was, it got her the reward and commendation of great charity. We muſt therefore all imitate the wiſdom of the poor widow, and exerciſe every virtue in the ſame manner that ſhe exerciſed her charity. We muſt ſtay for no time or opportunities, wait for no *change* of *life*, or *fancied abilities*, but remember that every time is a time for piety and perfection. Every thing but piety has its hindrances; but piety, the more it is hindered the higher it is raiſed. Let us therefore not vainly ſay, that if we had lived in our Saviour's days, we would have followed him; or that if we could work miracles, we would devote ourſelves to his glory. For, to follow Chriſt in our preſent ſtate, and to do all that we are able for his glory, is as acceptable to him, as if we were working miracles in his name.

XII. When our bleſſed Saviour was upon the croſs, he thus prayed for his enemies, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* †. Now all Chriſtians readily acknowledge that this temper of Chriſt is to be the *exact rule* of our temper on the like occaſion; that we are not to fall ſhort of it, but muſt be perfectly like Chriſt in this charity towards our murderers. But then

† Luke xxiii. 34.

then perhaps they do not enough conſider, that for the very ſame reaſon, every other temper of Chriſt, is as much the *exact rule* of all Chriſtians as his temper towards his murderers. For we are to be thus diſpoſed towards our perſecutors and murderers, becauſe Chriſt was ſo diſpoſed towards his. And is it not as good an argument, that we are to be ſo and ſo diſpoſed towards the world, and all worldly enjoyments, becauſe Chriſt was ſo diſpoſed towards them? He was as right in one caſe as the other, and no more erred in his temper towards *worldly things*, than in his temper towards his *enemies*. Should we not fail to be good Chriſtians, if we fell ſhort of that forgiving ſpirit, which the bleſſed Jeſus ſhewed upon the croſs? And ſhall we not equally fail to be good Chriſtians, if we fall ſhort of that humble and meek ſpirit which he ſhewed in all his life?

XIII. The ſhort of the matter is this, the ſpirit and temper of Chriſt is the *ſtrict meaſure* of the Spirit and temper of all Chriſtians. It is not in this or that particular temper of Chriſt, that we are to follow his example; but we are to aſpire after his whole ſpirit, to be in all things as he was, and think it as dangerous to depart from his Spirit and temper in one inſtance as in another. For beſides that there is the ſame authority in all that our Saviour did, which obliges us to conform to his whole example. Can any

one tell why we ſhould have more value for this world than our Saviour had? What is there in our *ſtate* and *circumſtances*, that can make it proper for us to have more affection for the things of this life than our Saviour had? Is the world any more our *happineſs*, than it was his happineſs? Are riches, and honours, and pleaſures, any more our *proper good*, than they were his? Are we any more born for this life than our Saviour was? Are we in leſs danger of being *corrupted* by its enjoyments than he was? Are we more at leiſure to take up *our reſt*, and ſpend our time in worldly ſatisfactions than he was? Have we a work upon our hands that we can *more eaſily finiſh*, than he could finiſh his? That requires of us leſs *mortification* and *ſelf-denial*, leſs *devotion* and *watching*, than our Saviour's required of him? Now as nothing of this can be ſaid; as this world is as little our happineſs, and more our danger than it was his; as we have a work to finiſh that requires *all our ſtrength*, it is plain there was no reaſon for his diſregard of the world, but what is the ſame reaſon for us to diſregard it in the ſame manner.

XIV. Take another inſtance of our bleſſed Saviour's Spirit, *I came down from heaven* (ſays he) *not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me* †.

And

† John vi. 38.

And again, *My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me.* Now, can any Christian shew, why he may think otherwise of himself, than our Saviour here thought? Or that he need be *less devoted* to the glory of God than he was? What is there in our nature and *condition* to make any difference of this kind? Or can any thing else be the happiness of our nature, but that which was the happiness of his? Was he a *loser?* Did he leave the true happiness of *human life*, by devoting himself to the will of God? Or can this be our case, tho' it was not his? *Can we be *losers* by looking to God *alone*, and *devoting* ourselves to his glory? Was it not the greatness and happiness of our Saviour that he lived to God alone? And is there any other greatness or happiness for us? We may as well seek out for another God, as for another happiness, or another way to it, than that in which Christ is gone before us. He did not mistake the nature of *man*, or the nature of the *world*; he did not overlook any *real felicity*, or pass by any *solid good*; he only made the best use of human life; and his spirit and temper is as *necessary* for our condition as it was for his. For this world, and all the things of the world, signify as *little* to us as they did to him. We are no more in our *true state*, till we are got out of this world, than he was; and we have no way to arrive at true felicity and greatness, but by so *devoting* ourselves to God as our blessed Saviour did. We must therefore make

it the buſineſs, and aim of our lives, to be like Chriſt: and this not in a *looſe* or *general* way, but with great *nicety* and *exactneſs*, always looking to his *ſpirit*, to his *ends* and *deſigns*, to his *tempers*, to his ways and converſation in the world, as the exact *model* and *rule* of ours.

XVI. Again, *Learn of me*, (ſaith our bleſſed Saviour) *for I am meek and lowly in heart.*

* It ought to be obſerved, that there muſt be ſomething very *extraordinary* in theſe diſpoſitions, from the manner in which we are taught them. It is only in this place, that our Saviour ſays expreſly, *Learn of me*; and when he ſays, *Learn of me*, he does not ſay, for I am juſt and equitable, or kind, or holy, but *I am meek and lowly in heart*; as if he would teach us, that theſe are the tempers which moſt of all *diſtinguiſh* his Spirit, and which he moſt of all requires his followers to learn of him. For conſider, does Chriſt, when he deſcribes himſelf, chuſe to do it by *theſe tempers?* When he calls upon us to learn of him, does he only mention *theſe tempers?* And is not this a ſufficient proof that theſe are tempers which the followers of Chriſt are moſt of all obliged to learn; and that we are then moſt *unlike* to Chriſt, when we are wanting in them? Now as our great Lord and Maſter has made theſe characters the *diſtinguiſhing* characters of his Spirit, it is plain that they are to be the *diſtinguiſhing* characters of our ſpirit; for we are only ſo far his,

as

as we are like him. Conſider alſo, was he *more lowly* than he need have been? Did he practiſe any degrees of humility that were *unneceſſary?* This can no more be ſaid, than he can be charged with folly. But can there be any inſtances of lowlineſs which became him, that are not neceſſary for us? Does our ſtate and condition excuſe us from any kind of humility that was neceſſary for him? Are we higher in our nature, more raiſed in our condition, or more in the favour of God than he was? Are there *dignities*, *honours*, and *ornaments* of life, which we may delight in, tho' he might not? We muſt own theſe abſurdities, or elſe acknowledge that we are to breathe the ſame *lowly ſpirit*, act with the *ſame meekneſs*, and practiſe the *ſame humble* behaviour that he did. So that the matter comes plainly to this concluſion, either that Chriſt was more humble than his nature and condition required, or we are under a neceſſity of the ſame humility, till we can prove, that we are in a higher ſtate than he was.

XVII. We ſee the height of our calling; that we are called to follow the example of our Lord and Maſter, and to go thro' this world with his Spirit and temper. Now nothing is ſo likely a means to fill us with his Spirit and temper, as to be frequent in reading the *goſpels*, which contain the hiſtory of his life and converſation in the world. We are apt to think, that we have

ſufficiently

ſufficiently read a book, when we have ſo read it, as to know what it contains. This reading may be ſufficient as to many books: but as to the *goſpels*, we are not to think that we have read them enough, becauſe we have often read and heard what they contain: but we muſt read them as we do our *prayers*, not to know what they contain, but to fill our hearts with the ſpirit of them. There is as much difference betwixt reading and reading, as there is betwixt praying and praying: and as no one prays well, but he that is daily and conſtant in prayer; ſo no one can read the ſcriptures to advantage, but he that is conſtant in the reading of them. By thus converſing with our bleſſed Lord; looking into his actions and manner of life; hearing his divine ſayings; his heavenly inſtructions; his accounts of the terrors of the damned; his deſcriptions of the glory of the righteous, we ſhould find our hearts formed and diſpoſed *to hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*. Happy they who ſaw the Son of God upon earth converting ſinners, and calling *fallen ſpirits* to return to God! And next happy are we, who have his diſcourſes, doctrines, actions, and miracles, which then converted *Jews* and Heathens into *ſaints* and *martyrs*, ſtill preſerved to fill us with the ſame heavenly light, and bring us to the ſame ſtate of glory!

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

An exhortation to Chriſtian perfection.

I. WHOEVER hath read the foregoing chapters with attention, is, I hope, ſufficiently inſtructed in the knowledge of Chriſtian perfection. He hath ſeen that it requireth us to *devote* ourſelves *wholly* unto God; to make the ends and deſigns of religion, the ends and deſigns of all our actions; that it calleth us to be *born again of* God; to live by the light of his Holy Spirit; to *renounce the world*, and all *worldly tempers*; to practiſe a conſtant *univerſal ſelf-denial*; to make daily war with the corruption of our nature; to ſhew the power of *divine grace*, by holineſs of converſation; to avoid all pleaſures and cares which *grieve the Holy Spirit*, and ſeparate him from us; to live in a *daily, conſtant ſtate* of prayer and devotion; and, as the crown of all, to imitate the *life and Spirit* of the Holy Jeſus.

II. * It now only remains that I exhort the reader to labour after this perfection. Was I to exhort any one to the ſtudy of *poetry* or *eloquence*, to labour to be *rich* and *great*, or to ſpend his time in *mathematics*, or other learning, I could only produce ſuch reaſons as are fit to de-

lude

lude the vanity of men, who are ready to be taken with any appearance of excellence. For if the ſame perſon was to aſk me, what it ſignifies to be a *poet* or *eloquent*, what advantage it would be to him, to be a great *mathematician*, or a great *ſtateſman*, I muſt be forced to anſwer, that theſe things would ſignify juſt as much to him, as they now ſignify to thoſe poets, orators, mathematicians, and ſtateſmen, whoſe bodies have been a long while loſt among common duſt. For if a man will be ſo thoughtful as to put the queſtion to every human enjoyment, and aſk what real good it would bring along with it, he would ſoon find, that every ſucceſs in the things of this life, leaves us juſt in the ſame ſtate of want and emptineſs in which it found us. If a man aſks why he ſhould labour to be the firſt *mathematician*, *orator*, or *ſtateſman*, the anſwer is eaſily given, becauſe of the *fame* and *honour* of ſuch a diſtinction; but if he was to aſk again, why he ſhould thirſt after fame and honour, or what good they would do him, he muſt ſtay long enough for an anſwer. For when we are at the *top* of all human attainments, we are ſtill at the *bottom* of all human miſery, and have made no farther advancement towards true happineſs, than thoſe whom we ſee in the want of all theſe excellencies. Whether a man die before he has writ *poems*, compiled *hiſtories*, or

III. On

raiſed an *eſtate*, ſignifies no more than whether he died an hundred or a thouſand years ago.

III. On the contrary, when any one is exhorted to labour after Chriſtian perfection, if he then aſks what good it will do him, the anſwer is ready, that it would do him a good which eternity only can meaſure; that it will deliver him from a ſtate of vanity and miſery: that it will raiſe him from the poor enjoyments of an animal life; that it will give him a glorious body, carry him, in ſpite of death and the grave, to live with God, be glorious among angels and heavenly beings, and be full of an infinite happineſs to all eternity. If therefore we could but make men ſo reaſonable, as to make the ſhorteſt enquiry into the nature of things, we ſhould have no occaſion to exhort them to ſtrive after Chriſtian perfection. *Two queſtions* we ſee put an end to all the vain projects of human life; they are all ſo empty and uſeleſs to our happineſs, that they cannot ſtand the trial of a *ſecond* queſtion. And, on the other hand, 'tis but aſking, whether Chriſtian perfection tends: and one ſingle thought upon the eternal happineſs it leads to, is ſufficient to make people *ſaints*.

IV. This ſhews us how inexcuſable all Chriſtians are, who are devoted to the things of this life. It is not becauſe they want *fine parts*, or are unable to make *deep reflections*; but it is becauſe

cauſe they reject the firſt principles of *common ſenſe*; they won't ſo much as aſk what thoſe things are which they are labouring after. Did they but uſe thus much reaſon, we need not deſire them to be wiſer, in order to ſeek only eternal happineſs. As a ſhadow at the firſt trial of the hand appears to have no ſubſtance; ſo all human enjoyments ſink away into nothing at the firſt approach of a *ſerious* thought. We muſt not therefore complain of the deceitful appearances of worldly enjoyments, becauſe the loweſt degree of reaſon, if liſtened to, is ſufficient to diſcover the cheat. If you will, you may *blindly* do what the reſt of the world are doing; you may follow the *cry*, and run yourſelf out of *breath* for you know not what: but if you will but ſhew ſo much ſenſe, as to aſk why you ſhould take ſuch a chace, you will need no deeper a reflection than this to make you leave the broad way; and let the wiſe and learned, the rich and great, be mad by themſelves. Thus much common ſenſe will turn your eyes towards God, will ſeparate you from all the appearances of worldly felicity, and fill you with one only ambition after eternal happineſs.

V. Suppoſe *ſtrict ſobriety* was the ſole end of man, the neceſſary condition of happineſs, what would you think of thoſe people, who, knowing and believing this to be true, ſhould yet ſpend their time in getting quantities of all ſorts of the

ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt liquors? What would you think if you ſaw them conſtantly enlarging their *cellars*, filling every room with *drams*, and contending who ſhould have the largeſt quantities of the ſtrongeſt liquors? Now this is the folly and madneſs of Chriſtians; they are as wiſe and reaſonable, as they are who are always providing ſtrong liquors, in order to be *ſtrictly ſober*. For all the enjoyments of human life, which Chriſtians ſo aſpire after, whether of *riches*, *greatneſs*, *honours*, or *pleaſures*, are as much the dangers and temptations of a Chriſtian, as ſtrong and pleaſant liquors are the temptations of a man that is to drink only water. Now if you was to aſk ſuch a man, why he is continually increaſing his ſtock of liquors, when he is to abſtain from them all, and only to drink water, he can give you as good a reaſon, as thoſe Chriſtians, who ſpare no pains to acquire riches, greatneſs, and pleaſures, at the ſame time that their ſalvation depends upon their renouncing them all, upon their heavenly-mindedneſs, humility, and conſtant ſelf-denial.

VI. But it may be you are not devoted to theſe things; you have a greater ſoul than to be taken with *riches*, *equipage*, or the *pageantry* of ſtate; you are deeply engaged in *learning* and *ſciences*.

You

You are ſquaring the *circle*, or ſettling the diſtances of the *ſtars*, or buſy in the ſtudy of *exotic plants*.

You are comparing the ancient languages, have made deep diſcoveries in the change of *letters*, and perhaps know how to write an *inſcription* in as obſcure characters as if you had lived above two thouſand years ago: or, perhaps you are meditating upon the *Heathen theology*, collecting the hiſtory of their *Gods* and *Goddeſſes*; or, you are ſcanning ſome ancient *Greek* or *Roman* poet, and making an exact collection of their *ſcattered* remains, *ſcraps* of ſentences, and *broken* words.

You are not expoſing your life in the field like a mad *Alexander* or *Cæſar*; but you are fighting over all their battles in your *ſtudy*; you are collecting the names of their *generals*, the number of their troops, the manner of their arms, and can give the world a more exact account of the times, places, and circumſtances of their battles, than has yet been ſeen.

VII. You will perhaps aſk, whether theſe are not very commendable enquiries? An excellent uſe of our time and parts? Whether people may not be very reaſonably exhorted to theſe kind of ſtudies? It may be anſwered, that all enquiries (however learned they may be reckoned) which do not improve the mind in ſome uſeful knowledge, that do not make us wiſe in *religious wiſdom*, are to be reckoned amongſt our

greateſt

greateſt vanities and follies. All ſpeculations that will not ſtand this trial, are to be looked upon as the wanderings and impertinencies of a *diſordered underſtanding*.

It is ſtrange want of thought to imagine, that an enquiry is ever the better, becauſe it is taken up in *Greek* and *Latin*. Why is it not as wiſe and reaſonable for a *ſcholar* to dwell in the *kitchen* and converſe with *cooks*, as to go into his ſtudy, to meditate upon the *Roman* art of *cookery*, and learn their variety of *ſauces* ?

*A grave *doctor* in divinity would perhaps think his time very ill employed, that he was acting below his character, if he was to be an *amanuenſis* to ſome *modern poet*. Why then does he think it ſuitable with the weight of his calling, to have been a *drudge* to ſome *ancient poet*, counting his ſyllables for ſeveral years, only to help the world to read what ſome *irreligious*, *wanton*, or *epicurean* poet has wrote ?

It is certainly a much more reaſonable employment to be making *cloaths*, than to ſpend one's time in reading or writing volumes upon the *Grecian* or *Roman* garments.

VIII. If you can ſhew me a learning that makes man truly ſenſible of his duty, that fills the mind with *true light*, that reforms the heart, that diſpoſes it right towards God, that makes us more *reaſonable* in all our actions ; that inſpires us with *fortitude*, *humility*, *devotion*, and contempt

tempt of the *world:* that gives us right notions of the *greatneſs* of religion, the *ſanctity* of morality, the *littleneſs* of every thing but God, the *vanity* of our paſſions, and the miſery and corruption of our nature, I will own myſelf an advocate for ſuch learning. But to think that time is well employed, becauſe it is ſpent in ſuch ſpeculations as the vulgar cannot reach, or becauſe they are fetched from antiquity, or found in *Greek* or *Latin*, is a folly that may be called as great as any in human life.

They who think that theſe enquiries are conſiſtent with a heart *entirely devoted* to God, have not enough conſidered human nature; they would do well to conſult our Saviour's rebuke of *Martha*. She did not ſeem to have wandered far from her proper buſineſs; ſhe was not buſy in the hiſtory of *houſe-wifery*, or enquiring into the *original of the diſtaff*; ſhe was only taken up with preſent affairs, and *cumbered about much ſerving:* but our bleſſed Saviour ſaid unto her, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful.*

Now if *ſcholars* and *divines* can ſhew, that they only apply to ſuch ſtudies as are ſerviceable to the *one thing needful*; if they are buſy in a philoſophy and learning that have a neceſſary connection with the devotion of the heart to God, ſuch learning becomes the followers of Chriſt; but, if they trifle in *Greek* and *Latin*, and only aſſiſt other people to follow them in the ſame

ſame impertinence, ſuch learning may be reckoned amongſt the corruptions of the age. For all the arguments againſt *pride*, *covetouſneſs*, and *vanity*, are as good arguments againſt *ſuch learning*; it being the ſame irreligion to be devoted to any falſe *learning*, as to be devoted to any other *falſe good*.

A ſatisfaction in any vain ornaments of the body, whether of *cloaths* or *paint*, is no greater a miſtake, than a ſatisfaction in the *vain accompliſhments* of the mind.

IX. A man that is eager and laborious in the ſearch and ſtudy of that which does him *no good*, is the ſame poor, little ſoul, as the *miſer* who is happy in his *bags* that are laid by in duſt. A ridiculous application of our *money*, *time*, and *underſtanding*, is the ſame fault, whether it be found amongſt the finery of *ſops*, the hoards of *miſers*, or the trinkets of *virtuoſo*'s. It is the ſame falſe turn of mind, the ſame miſtake of the uſe of things, the ſame ignorance of the ſtate of man, and the ſame offence againſt religion.

* When we ſee a man brooding over *bags* of wealth, and labouring to die *rich*, we do not only accuſe him of a poor littleneſs of mind; but we charge him with great guilt; we do not allow ſuch a one to be in a ſtate of religion. Let us therefore ſuppoſe that this covetous man was on a ſudden changed into another temper; that he was grown *polite* and *curious*; that he was fond

and

and eager after the moſt uſeleſs things, if they were but *ancient* and *ſcarce*; let us ſuppoſe that he is now as greedy of *original paintings*, as he was before of *money*; that he will give more for a *dog's head*, or a *ſnuff* of a candle done by a good *hand*, than he ever gave in charity all his life; is he a wiſer man, or a better Chriſtian than he was before? Has he more overcome the world, or is he more devoted to God, than when his ſoul was locked up with his money? Alas! his heart is in the ſame falſe ſatisfaction; he is in the ſame ſtate of ignorance, is as far from the true good, as much ſeparated from God, as he whoſe ſoul is cleaving to the duſt; he lives in the ſame vanity, and muſt die in the ſame miſery, as he that lives and dies in *foppery* or covetouſneſs.

X. Here therefore I place my argument for *Chriſtian perfection*. I exhort thee to labour after it, becauſe there is nothing elſe for thee to labour after; there is nothing elſe that the reaſon of man can exhort thee to. The whole world has nothing to offer thee in its ſtead; chuſe what other way thou wilt, thou haſt choſen nothing but vanity and miſery; for all the different ways of the world are only different ways of deluding thyſelf: this only excells that as one vanity can excel another. If thou wilt make thyſelf more happy than thoſe who purſue their own deſtruction, if thou wilt ſhew thyſelf wiſer than *ſops*, more

more reasonable than *sordid misers*, thou must pursue that happiness, and study that wisdom which leads to God; for every other pursuit, every other way of life, however *polite* or *plausible* in the opinion of the world, has a folly and stupidity in it that is equal to the folly and stupidity of *fops* and *misers*.

For awhile shut thine eyes, and think of the *silliest creature* in human life; imagine to thyself something that thou thinkest the most *poor* and *vain* in the way of the world. Now thou art thyself that poor and vain creature, unless thou art devoted to God, and labouring after Christian perfection; unless this be thy difference from the world, thou canst not think of any creature more silly than thyself. For it is not any *post*, or condition, or figure in life, that makes one man wiser or better than another; if thou art a proud *scholar*, a worldly *priest*, an indevout *philosopher*, a crafty *politician*, an ambitious *statesman*, thy imagination cannot invent a way of life that has more of vanity or folly than thine own.

XI. Every one has wisdom enough to see what variety of fools and madmen there are in the world.

Now perhaps we cannot do better, than to find out the true reason of the folly and madness of any sort of life. Ask thyself therefore wherein consists the folly of any sort of life, which is most condemned in thy judgment.

* Is a drunken *fox-hunter* leading a foolish life? Wherein consists the folly of it? Is it because he is not getting money upon the *exchange?* Or because he is not wrangling at the *bar?* Or not waiting at *court?* No; the folly of it consists in this, that he is not living like a *reasonable creature*; that he is not acting like a being that has a salvation to work out with *fear and trembling*; that he is throwing away his time amongst *dogs*, and noise, and intemperance, which he should devote to watching and prayer, and the improvement of his soul in all holy tempers. Now, if this is the folly (as it most certainly is) of an intemperate *fox-hunter*, it shews us an equal folly in every other way of life, where the same great ends of living are neglected. Tho' we are shining at the *bar*, making a figure at *court*, great at the *exchange*, or famous in the *schools* of *philosophy*, we are yet the same despicable creatures as the intemperate *fox-hunter*, if these things keep us as far from holiness and heavenly affections. There is nothing greater in any way of life than *fox-hunting:* it is all the same folly, unless religion be the beginning and ending, the rule and measure of it all. For it is as *noble* a *wisdom*, and shews as *great* a *soul*, to die less holy and heavenly for the sake of *hunting* and *noise*, as for the sake of any thing that the world can give us.

XL. Another

XII. Another motive to induce you to aſpire after *Chriſtian perfection*, may be taken from the double advantage of it in this life, and that which is to come.

The apoſtle thus exhorts the *Corinthians*, *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as ye know that your labour will not be in vain in the Lord* †.

This is an exhortation founded upon ſolid reaſon: for what can be ſo reaſonable, as to be always abounding in *that work* which will never be *in vain?* Whilſt we are pleaſed with ourſelves, or pleaſed with the world, we are pleaſed with vanity; and our moſt proſperous labours of this kind are but *vanity of vanities:* but whilſt we are labouring after Chriſtian perfection, we are labouring for eternity, and building to ourſelves higher ſtations in the joys of heaven. *As one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory, ſo alſo is the reſurrection of the dead.* We ſhall ſurely riſe to different degrees of glory, of joy and happineſs in God, according to our different advancements in holineſs, and good works.

No degrees of mortification and ſelf-denial, no private prayers, no ſecret mournings, no inſtances of charity, no labour of love, will ever be forgotten, but all treaſured up to our everlaſting comfort. For though the rewards of the other life are free gifts of God; yet ſince he

† 1 Cor. xv. 58.

has assured us, that every man shall be rewarded according to his works, it is certain that our rewards will be as different as our works have been.

XIII. Now stand still awhile, and ask yourself, whether you really believe this to be true, that the more perfect we are here, the more happy we shall be hereafter? If you do not believe this, you know nothing of God and religion. And if you do believe it, is it possible to be *awake* and not aspiring after Christian perfection? What can you think of, what can the world shew you, that can make you any amends for the loss of *any degree* of virtue? Can any way of life make it reasonable for you to die *less perfect* than you might have done? But if you would now devote yourself to God, perhaps you must part with some friends; you must displease some relations, you must refrain from some pleasures, you must alter your life; nay, perhaps you must do more than this, you must expose yourself to the hatred of your friends, to the jest and ridicule of *wits*, and to the scorn and derision of worldly men. But had you not better do and suffer all this, than die *less perfect*, less prepared for eternal glory? And indeed the suffering all this is suffering nothing. For why should it signify any thing to you, what *fools* and *madmen* think of you? And surely it can be no wrong or rash judgment to think those both fools and

and mad, who condemn what God approves, and like that which God condemns: but if you think this too much to be done, to obtain eternal glory, think on the other hand, what can be gained inſtead of it.

* Fancy yourſelf living in all the eaſe and pleaſure that the world can give you, eſteemed by your friends, undiſturbed by your enemies, and gratifying all your *natural tempers*. If you could *ſtand ſtill* in ſuch a ſtate, you might ſay that you had got *ſomething*; but alas! every day that is *added* to ſuch a life, is the ſame thing as a day taken from it, and ſhews you that ſo much happineſs is gone from you. For be as happy as you will, you muſt ſee it all ſinking away from you; you muſt feel yourſelf *decline*; you muſt ſee that your time *ſhortens apace*; you muſt hear of *ſudden deaths*; you muſt fear *ſickneſs*; you muſt both dread and deſire *old age*; you muſt fall into the hands of death; you muſt either die in the bitter ſorrows of a deep repentance, or in ſad gloomy deſpair, wiſhing for *mountains to fall upon you, and rocks to cover you.* And is this a happineſs to be choſen? Is this all that you can gain by neglecting God, by following your own deſires, and not labouring after Chriſtian perfection? Is it worth your while to ſeparate yourſelf from God, to loſe your ſhare in the realms of light, to be *thus happy*; or, I may better ſay, to be thus miſerable even in this life? You may be ſo blind and fooliſh, as not

to think of these things; but it is impossible to think of them, without labouring after *Christian perfection.*

XIV. It may be, you are too young, too happy, or too busy to be affected with these reflections; but let me tell you, that *all* will be over before you are aware; your *day* will be spent, and leave you to such a *night*, as that which surprized the *foolish virgins. And at midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out and meet him* †.

* The *last hour* will soon be with you, when you will have nothing to look for, but your *reward* in another life; when you will stand with nothing but *eternity* before you, and must begin to be something that will be your state for ever. I can no more *reach* heaven with my hands, than I can describe the sentiments that you then will have; you will then feel motions of heart that you never felt before; all your thoughts and reflections will pierce your soul in a manner, that you never before experienced; and you will feel the immortality of your nature, by the depth and piercing vigour of your thoughts. You will then know what it is to die; you will then know that you never knew it before, that you never thought worthily of it; but that dying thoughts are as *new* and *amazing* as that state which follows them.

Let

† Matt. xxv. 6.

Let me therefore exhort you to come prepared to this time of trial; to look out for comfort, whilſt the day is before you; to treaſure up ſuch a *fund* of good and pious works, as may make you able to bear that ſtate, which cannot be borne without them. Could I any way make you apprehend, how dying men feel the want of a pious life; how they lament time loſt, health and ſtrength ſquandered away in folly; how they look at eternity, and what they think of the rewards of another life, you would ſoon find yourſelf one of thoſe, who deſire to live in the higheſt ſtate of piety and perfection, that by this means you may grow old in peace, and die in full hope of eternal glory.

XV. Conſider again, that beſides the rewards of the other life, the devoting yourſelf wholly to God has a great reward even in this life, as it makes religion *doubly* pleaſant to you. Whilſt you are divided betwixt God and the world, you have neither the pleaſures of religion, nor the pleaſures of the world; but are always in the uneaſineſs of a divided ſtate of heart. You have only ſo much religion as ſerves to diſquiet you; to check your enjoyments; to ſhew you a *hand-writing upon the wall*; to interrupt your pleaſures; to reproach you with your follies; and to appear as a *death's head* at all your feaſts; but not religion enough to give you a taſte and feeling of its proper pleaſures and ſatisfactions.

You dare not wholly neglect religion; but then, you take no more of it than is just sufficient to keep you from being a terror to yourself; and you are as loath to be *very good*, as you are fearful to be *very bad*. So that you are just as happy as the *slave*, that dares not run away from his master, and yet always serves him against his will. Instead of having a religion that is your comfort in all troubles, your religion is itself a *trouble*, under which you want to be comforted; and those days and times hang heaviest on your hands, which leave you only to the offices and duties of religion. *Sunday* would be very dull and tiresome, but that it is but one day in *seven*, and is made a day of *dressing* and *visiting*, as well as of divine service. You don't care to keep away from the public worship, but are always glad when it is over. This is the state of half *piety*; thus they live who add religion to a worldly life; all their religion is mere *yoke* and *burden*, and is only made tolerable by having but little of their time.

XVI. *Urbanus* goes to church, but he hardly knows whether he goes out of a sense of duty, or to meet his friends. He wonders at those people who are *prophane*, and what pleasure they can find in irreligion; but then, he is in as great a wonder at those who would make every day a day of divine worship. He feels no more of the pleasures of piety, than of the pleasures of

prophane-

prophaneneſs. As religion has every thing from him but his *heart*, ſo he has every thing from religion but its *comforts*. *Urbanus* likes religion, becauſe it ſeems an *eaſy* way of pleaſing God; a *decent* thing, that takes up but little of our time, and is a proper *mixture* of life: but if he was reduced to take *comfort* in it, he would be as much at a loſs, as thoſe who have lived without God in the world. When *Urbanus* thinks of joy, and pleaſure, and happineſs, he does not think at all of religion. He has gone through a hundred misfortunes, fallen into variety of hardſhips; but never thought of making religion his *comfort* in any of them. He makes himſelf quiet and happy in another manner. He is content with his Chriſtianity, not becauſe he is *pious*, but becauſe he is not *prophane*. He continues in the ſame courſe of religion, not becauſe of any real good he ever found in it, but becauſe it does him no hurt.

* To ſuch poor purpoſes as theſe do numbers of people profeſs Chriſtianity. Let me therefore exhort you to a *ſolid piety*, to devote yourſelf wholly unto God; that entering deep into religion, you may enter deep into its comforts; that ſerving God with all your heart, you may have the peace and pleaſure of a heart that is at unity with itſelf. When your conſcience once bears you witneſs, that you are *ſtedfaſt, immoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord*, you will find that your reward is al-

ready begun, and that you could not be less devout, less holy, less charitable, or less humble, without lessening the most substantial pleasure that ever you felt in your life. So that to be content with any lower attainments in piety, is to rob ourselves of a present happiness, which nothing else can give us.

XVII. You would perhaps devote yourself to perfection, but for this or that *little difficulty* that lies in your way; you are not in so convenient a state for the full practice of piety as you could wish: but consider that this is nonsense, because perfection consists in conquering difficulties. You could not be perfect as the present state of trial requires, had you not those difficulties and inconveniences to struggle with. These things therefore which you would have removed, are laid in your way, that you may make them so many steps to glory.

As you could not exercise your charity, unless you met with objects; so neither could you shew, that you had *overcome* the world, unless you had many worldly engagements to overcome. If all your *friends* and *acquaintance* were devout, humble, heavenly-minded, and wholly intent upon the one end of life, it would be less perfection in you to be like them: But if you are *humble* amongst those that delight in pride, *heavenly-minded* amongst the worldly, *sober* amongst the intemperate, *devout* amongst the irreligious,

ligious, and labouring after *perfection* amongſt thoſe that deſpiſe and ridicule your labours, then are you truly devoted unto God. Conſider therefore, that you can have no difficulty, but ſuch as the world lays in your way; and that perfection is never to be had, but by parting with the world. To ſtay therefore to be perfect till it ſuits with your condition in the world, is like ſtaying to be charitable till there were no objects of charity. It is as if a man ſhould intend to be courageous ſome time or other, when there is nothing left to try his courage.

XVIII. Again, you perhaps turn your eyes upon the world; you ſee all orders of people full of other cares and pleaſures; you ſee the generality of *clergy* and *laity*, learned and unlearned, your friends and acquaintance, moſtly living according to the ſpirit that reigneth in the world; you are therefore content with ſuch a *piety* as you think contents great *ſcholars* and *famous* men: and it may be you cannot think that God will reject ſuch numbers of Chriſtians. Now all this is amuſing yourſelf with nothing; it is only loſing yourſelf in vain imaginations; it is making that a *rule* which is no rule, and cheating yourſelf into a falſe ſatisfaction. As you are not cenſoriouſly to damn other people; ſo neither are you to think your own ſalvation ſecure, becauſe you are like the generality of the world.

* The *foolish virgins* that had provided no oil their lamps, and so were shut out of the marriage-feast, were only thus far *foolish*, that they trusted to the *assistance* of those that were *wise*: but you are more foolish than they; for you trust to be saved by the folly of others; you imagine yourself safe in the *negligence*, *vanity*, and *irregularity* of the world; you take confidence in the *broad way*, because it is *broad*; you are content with yourself, because you seem to be along with *the many*, though God himself has told you, that *narrow* is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

XIX. One word more and I have done. Think with yourself, what a happiness it is, that you have it in your power to secure a share in the glories of heaven, and make yourself one of those blessed beings that are to live with God for ever. Reflect upon the glories of bright angels, that shine about the throne of heaven. Think upon that fulness of joy, which is the state of Christ at the right hand of God; and remember that it is this same state of glory and joy that lies open for you. You are less, it may be, in worldly distinctions than many others; but as to your relation to God, you have no superior upon earth. Let your condition be what it will, let your life be ever so mean, you may make the end of it the beginning of eternal glory. Be often therefore in these reflections,

that

that they may fill you with a wife ambition of all that glory which God in Chriſt hath called you to. For it is impoſſible to underſtand and feel any thing of this, without feeling your heart affected with ſtrong deſires after it. There are many things in human life which it would be in vain for you to aſpire after; but the happineſs of the next, the ſum of all happineſs, is ſecure and ſafe to you againſt all accidents. Here no chances or misfortunes can prevent your ſucceſs; neither can the treachery of friends, nor the malice of enemies diſappoint you; it is only your own falſe heart that can rob you of this happineſs. Be but your own true friend, and then you have nothing to fear from your enemies. Do but you ſincerely labour in the Lord, and then neither heighth nor depth, neither life nor death, neither men or devils, can make your labour vain.

An Extract from Mr. LAW's

SERIOUS CALL

TO A HOLY LIFE.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the nature and extent of Christian devotion.

1. DEVOTION is neither *private* nor *publick* prayer; but prayers, whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of devotion. Devotion signifies a life *devoted* to God.

He therefore is the *devout* man, who lives no longer to his own *will*, or the *way* and *spirit* of the world, but to the sole will of God; who considers God in every thing, who serves God in every thing, who makes all the parts of his *common* life, parts of piety, by doing every thing in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to his glory.

2. * We readily acknowledge, that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our *prayers*; that in them we are to look *wholly* unto him, and act

wholly

wholly for him; that we are only to pray in *such a manner*, for *such things*, and *such ends*, as are suitable to his glory.

Now let any one but find out the reason why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same as strong a reason to be strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the least reason why we should make God the *rule* and *measure* of our prayers, why we should then look *wholly* unto him, and pray according to his will; but what equally proves it necessary for us to look *wholly* unto God, and make him the rule and measure of all the other actions of our life. Were it not our strict duty to live by *reason*, to devote all the actions of our lives to God; were it not absolutely necessary to walk before him in wisdom and holiness, and all heavenly conversation, doing every thing in his name and for his glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most *heavenly prayers*: nay, such prayers would be absurdities; they would be like prayers for *wings*, when it was no part of our duty to *fly*.

3. As sure therefore as there is any wisdom in praying for the Spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that Spirit the rule of *all* our actions; as sure as it is our duty to look *wholly* unto God in our prayers, so sure is it, that it is our duty to live *wholly* unto God in our lives. But we can no more be said to live unto God, unless we live unto him in all our *ordinary* actions, unless

leſs he be the rule and meaſure of all our ways, than we can be ſaid to pray unto God, unleſs our prayers look *wholly* unto him. So that unreaſonable and abſurd ways of life, whether in *labour* or *diverſion*, whether they conſume our *time* or our *money*, are like unreaſonable and abſurd prayers, and are as truly an offence unto God.

4. 'Tis for want of knowing, or at leaſt conſidering this, that we ſee ſuch a *mixture* of ridicule in the lives of many people. You ſee them ſtrict as to ſome *times* and *places* of devotion; but when the ſervice of the *church* is over, they are but like thoſe that ſeldom or never come there. In their way of life, their manner of ſpending their *time* and *money*, in their *cares* and *fears*, in their *pleaſures* and *indulgencies*, in their labour and diverſions, they are like the reſt of the world. This makes the world generally make a jeſt of thoſe that are *devout*, becauſe they ſee their devotion goes no farther than their *prayers*, and that they live no more unto God, till the time of prayer returns again; but live by the ſame *humour* and *fancy*, and in as full an enjoyment of all the follies of life as other people. This is the reaſon why they are the jeſt of worldly people; not becauſe they are really devoted to God, but becauſe they appear to have no other devotion, but that of *occaſional prayers*.

5. *Julius*

5. *Julius* is very fearful of miſſing prayers; all the pariſh ſuppoſes *Julius* to be ſick, if he is not at *church*. But if you was to aſk him, why he ſpends the reſt of his time by *humour* or *chance?* Why he is a companion of the ſillieſt people in their moſt *ſilly pleaſures?* Why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diverſion? If you was to aſk him why there is no amuſement too triffling to pleaſe him? Why he gives himſelf up to an *idle*, *goſſiping* converſation? Why he lives in fooliſh friendſhips for particular perſons, that neither want nor deſerve any particular kindneſs? If you aſk him why he never puts his *converſation*, his *time*, and *fortune* under the rules of religion, *Julius* has no more to ſay for himſelf than the moſt diſorderly perſon. For the whole tenor of ſcripture lies as directly againſt ſuch a life, as againſt *debauchery* and *intemperance*. He that lives in ſuch a courſe, lives no more according to the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, than he that lives in gluttony and intemperance.

If a man was to tell *Julius*, that there was no occaſion for ſo much conſtancy at prayers, and that he might neglect the ſervice of the church, as the generality of people do, *Julius* would think ſuch a one to be no Chriſtian, and that he ought to avoid his company: but if a perſon only tell him, that he may live as the generality of the world does, that he may enjoy himſelf as others do, that he may ſpend his *time* and

money

money as people of fashion do, that he may conform to the follies of the generality, and gratify his temper and passions as most people do, *Julius* never suspects that man to want a Christian spirit, or that he is doing the devil's work.

6. The short of the matter is this. Either reason and religion prescribe *rules* and *ends* to all the ordinary actions of our lives, or they do not: if they do, then it is as necessary to govern all our actions by those rules as it is necessary to worship God. For if religion teaches us any thing concerning *eating* and *drinking*, or spending our *time* and *money*; if it teaches us how we are to *use* the world; if it tells us what tempers we are to have in *common* life, how we are to be disposed towards all people, how we are to behave towards the *sick*, the *poor*, the *old* and *destitute*; if it tells us whom we are to treat with a particular love, whom we are to regard with a particular esteem; if it tells us how we are to treat our enemies, and how we are to deny ourselves, he must be very weak that can think these parts of religion are not to be observed with as much *exactness* as any doctrines that relate to prayers.

7. Our blessed Saviour and his apostles are wholly taken up in doctrines that relate to *common life*. They call us to differ in every *temper* and *way* of life from the spirit and way of the world: to renounce all its goods, to fear none of its

its evils, to reject its joys, and have no value for its happineſs: to be as *new-born babes*, that are born into a new ſtate of things; to live as pilgrims, in ſpiritual watching, in holy fear, aſpiring after another life; to take up our daily croſs; to deny ourſelves; to profeſs the bleſſedneſs of mourning; to ſeek the bleſſedneſs of poverty of ſpirit; to forſake the pride and vanity of riches; to take no thought for the morrow; to live in the profoundeſt humility; to rejoice in ſufferings; to reject the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life; to bear injuries; to forgive and bleſs our enemies, and to love mankind as God loveth them; to give up our whole hearts and affections to God; and ſtrive to enter thro' the ſtrait gate into a life of eternal glory.

8. Thus it is in all virtues and holy tempers; they are not *ours*, unleſs they be the virtues and tempers of our *ordinary life*. So that Chriſtianity is ſo far from leaving us to live in the common ways of life, conforming to the folly of cuſtoms, and gratifying the paſſions and tempers which the ſpirit of the world delights in: it is ſo far from indulging us in any of theſe things, that all its virtues, which it makes neceſſary to ſalvation, are only ſo many ways of living, contrary to the world in all the common actions of our life.

If our common life is not a courſe of *humility*, *ſelf-denial*, *renunciation* of the world, *poverty* of ſpirit,

ſpirit, and *heavenly* affection, we don't live the life of Chriſtians.

9. But yet, tho' it is thus plain, that this, and this alone, is Chriſtianity, an uniform, open and viſible practice of all theſe virtues; yet it is as plain, that there is little or nothing of this to be found, even among the better ſort of people. You ſee them often at church; but look into their lives, and you ſee them juſt the ſame ſort of people as others are. The difference that you find betwixt them is only the difference of their natural tempers. They have the ſame *taſte* of the world, the ſame worldly cares, fears, and joys; they have the ſame *turn* of mind, are equally *vain* in their deſires. You ſee the ſame vanity of *dreſs*, the ſame *ſelf-love* and indulgence, the ſame fooliſh *friendſhips* and groundleſs *hatreds*, the ſame *levity* of mind and *trifling* ſpirits, the ſame idle diſpoſitions, and vain ways of ſpending their time in viſiting and converſation, as in the reſt of the world, that make no pretences to devotion.

10. I don't mean this compariſon betwixt people ſeemingly good and profeſſed *rakes* but betwixt people of ſober lives. Let us take an inſtance in two modeſt women: let it be ſuppoſed that one of them is careful of times of devotion, thro' a ſenſe of duty; and that the other is at church ſeldom or often, juſt as it happens. Now it is a very eaſy thing to ſee this difference betwixt theſe perſons. But, can you find any farther difference betwixt them? Can you find that their

common life is of a different kind? Are not the *tempers*, and *cuſtoms*, and *manners*, of the one, of the ſame kind as of the other? Do they live as if they belonged to different worlds, had different views in their heads, and different rules and meaſures of all their actions? Have not they the ſame *goods* and *evils?* Are they not pleaſed and diſpleaſed in the *ſame manner*, and for the ſame things? Do they not live in the ſame courſe of life? Does one ſeem to be of this world, looking at the things that are temporal, and the other to be of another world, looking wholly at the things that are eternal? Does the one live in pleaſure, delighting herſelf in *ſhew* or *dreſs*, and the other live in *ſelf-denial*, renouncing every thing that looks like vanity, either of *perſon*, *dreſs*, or *carriage?* Does the one trifle away her time? And does the other ſtudy all the arts of improving it, living in prayer and watching, and ſuch good works as may make all her time turn to her advantage, and be placed to her account at the laſt day? Is the one careleſs of expence, and glad to adorn herſelf with every coſtly ornament of dreſs? And does the other conſider her fortune as a talent given her by God, which is to be improved religiouſly, and no more to be ſpent in vain and needleſs ornaments than it is to be buried in the earth?

Where muſt you look, to find one perſon of religion differing in this manner from another that has none? And yet if they do not differ in theſe

these things, can it with any sense be said, the one is a *good* Christian, and the other not?

11. Take another instance among the men. *Leo* has a great deal of good nature, has kept what they call *good* company, hates every thing that is *false* and *base*, is very generous to his friends; but has concerned himself so little with religion, that he hardly knows the difference betwixt a *Jew* and a *Christian*.

Eusebius, on the other hand, has had early impressions of religion, and buys books of devotion. He can talk of all the *feasts* and *fasts* of the church, and knows the *names* of most men that have been eminent for piety. You never hear him swear, and when he talks of religion, he talks of it as a matter of great concern.

Here you see, that one person has religion enough, to be reckoned a *pious Christian*; and the other is so far from all appearance of religion, that he may fairly be reckoned a *Heathen*. And yet, if you look into their *common life*, if you examine their *ruling* tempers in the greatest *articles* of life, you will find the least difference imaginable. Consider them with regard to the use of the world, because that is what every body can see. Now, to have right *notions* and *tempers*, with regard to the world, is as essential to religion, as to have right notions of God. And it is as possible for a man to worship a *Crocodile*, and yet be a *pious man*, as to have his affections

tions ſet upon this world, and yet be a *good Chriſtian.*

But now, if you conſider *Leo* and *Euſebius* in this reſpect, you will find them exactly alike; ſeeking, uſing, and enjoying all that can be got in this world, in the ſame manner. You will find, *riches*, *proſperity*, *pleaſures*, and *honour*, are juſt as much the happineſs of *Euſebius* as they are of *Leo*. And yet, if Chriſtianity has not changed a man's temper, with relation to theſe things, what has it done for him?

12. Every one capable of reflection, muſt have obſerved, that this is generally the ſtate, even of devout people, whether *men* or *women*. You may ſee them different from other people, as to *times* and *places* of prayer, but like the reſt of the world in all the other parts of their lives; that is, adding *Chriſtian* devotion to an *Heathen* life. I have the authority of our bleſſed Saviour for this remark, where he ſays, *Take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat, or what ſhall we drink, or wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed? For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek.* But if to be thus affected even with the neceſſary things of this life, ſhews that we are not of a *Chriſtian ſpirit*, but an *Heathen*; ſurely, to enjoy the vanity of the world as they did, to be like them in the main tempers of our lives, in ſenſual pleaſures and diverſions, in the vanity of dreſs, the love of ſhew and greatneſs, or any other gaudy diſtinctions of fortune, is a much greater ſign of an

Heathen

Heathen temper; and consequently, they who add devotion to such a life, must be said to *pray* as *Christians*, but live as *Heathens*.

CHAP. II.

An enquiry into the reason why the generality of Christians *fall so short of the holiness of Christianity.*

1. IT may now be reasonably enquired, how it is, that the lives, even of the better sort of people, are thus strangely contrary to the principles of Christianity?

Before I give a direct answer, I desire it may be enquired, how it is, that *swearing* is so common amongst Christians? It is indeed yet not so common amongst *women*, as amongst *men*; but among men this sin is so common, that perhaps there are more than two in three that are guilty of it through the whole course of their lives; swearing *more* or *less*, just as it happens; some constantly, others only now and then. Now I ask how comes it, that two in three of men are guilty of so gross a sin as this is? There is neither ignorance nor human infirmity to plead for it: it is against an express commandment, and the most plain doctrine of our blessed Saviour.

Do but find the reason why the generality of men live in this notorious vice, and you will have

have found the reaſon, why the generality even of the better ſort of people, live ſo contrary to Chriſtianity.

2. * Now the reaſon of common ſwearing is this; it is becauſe men have not ſo much as the *intention to pleaſe God in all their actions.* For, let a man but have ſo much piety as to *intend to pleaſe God in all the actions of his life, as the happieſt and beſt thing in the world,* and then he will never ſwear more. It will be as impoſſible for him to ſwear, whilſt he feels *this intention* within himſelf, as it is impoſſible for a man that intends to pleaſe his prince, to go up and abuſe him to his face.

3. It is but a ſmall part of piety to have ſuch an *intention* as this; and he has no reaſon to look upon himſelf as a diſciple of Chriſt, who is not this far advanced. And yet it is purely for want of this degree of piety, that you ſee ſuch a mixture of ſin and folly in the lives even of the better ſort of people. It is for want of this *intention,* that you ſee men that profeſs religion, yet live in *ſwearing* and *ſenſuality*; that you ſee *clergymen* given to pride and covetouſneſs, and worldly enjoyments. It is for want of this *intention,* that you ſee *women* that profeſs devotion yet living in all the vanity and folly of *dreſs,* and waſting their time in *idleneſs* and *pleaſures,* in all ſuch inſtances as their eſtates will reach. For, let but a woman feel her heart full of *this intention,* and ſhe will find it as impoſſible to *patch* or

paint, as to curſe or ſwear; ſhe will no more deſire to ſhine at *balls* and *aſſemblies*, or make a figure amongſt thoſe that are moſt finely dreſſed, than ſhe will deſire to dance upon a *rope* to pleaſe ſpectators: ſhe will know, that the one is as far from the *wiſdom* and *excellency* of the Chriſtian ſpirit as the other.

4. It was this *general intention* that made the *primitive Chriſtians* ſuch eminent inſtances of piety. And if you will here ſtop, and aſk yourſelf, why you are not as pious as the primitive Chriſtians were, your own heart will tell you, it is neither through *ignorance* or *inability*, but purely becauſe you never *thoroughly intended* it. You obſerve the ſame *Sunday-worſhip* that they did; and you are *ſtrict* in it, becauſe it is your full intention to be ſo. And when you as fully intend to be like them in their *common* life; when you intend to pleaſe God in *all your actions*, you will find it as poſſible, as to be ſtrictly exact in the ſervice of the church. And when you have this *intention to pleaſe God in all your actions, as the happieſt and beſt thing in the world*, you will find in you as great an averſion to any thing that is *vain* and *impertinent* in common life, whether of buſineſs or pleaſure, as you now have to any thing that is *prophane*. You will be as fearful of living in any fooliſh way, either of ſpending your time, or your *fortune*, as you are now fearful of neglecting the public worſhip.

5. Now

5. Now, who that wants this general *intention*, can be reckoned a Chriſtian? And yet if it was among Chriſtians, it would change the whole face of the world; exemplary holineſs, would be as common and viſible, as *buying* and *ſelling*, or any trade in life.

* Let a *clergyman* but be thus *pious*, and he will *converſe* as if he had been brought up by an *apoſtle*. He will no more think and talk of *noble preferment*, than of *noble eating*, or a glorious *chariot*. He will no more complain of the *frowns* of the *world*, or a *ſmall cure*, or the want of a *patron*, than he will complain of a *laced coat* or a *running horſe*. Let him but *intend to pleaſe God in all his actions, as the happieſt and beſt thing in the world*, and then he will know, that there is nothing *noble* in a clergyman, but burning zeal for the ſalvation of ſouls; nor any thing poor in his profeſſion, but *idleneſs* and a *worldly ſpirit*. Again, let a *tradeſman* but have this *intention*, and it will make him a ſaint in his *ſhop*; his every day buſineſs will be a courſe of wiſe and reaſonable actions, made holy to God, by being done in obedience to his will and pleaſure. He will *buy* and *ſell*, and *labour* and travel, becauſe by ſo doing he can do ſome good to himſelf and others; but then, as nothing can pleaſe God but what is wiſe, and reaſonable, and holy; ſo he will neither buy nor ſell, nor labour in any *manner*, but ſuch as is *wiſe*, and *reaſonable*, and *holy*. He will therefore conſider, not what

arts, or methods, will make him richer and greater than his brethren, or remove him from a *ſhop* to a life of *ſtate* and *pleaſure*; but he will conſider what arts, what methods, can make worldly buſineſs moſt acceptable to God, and make a life of trade a life of holineſs, devotion, and piety. This will be the temper and ſpirit of every tradeſman; he cannot ſtop ſhort of theſe degrees of piety, whenever it is his *intention to pleaſe God in all his actions, as the beſt and happieſt thing in the world.*

6. Again, let the *gentleman* of fortune but have this *intention*, and it will carry him from every appearance of evil, to every inſtance of piety and goodneſs.

He cannot live by *chance*, or as *humour* or fancy carries him, becauſe he knows that nothing can pleaſe God but a wiſe and regular courſe of life. He cannot live in *idleneſs* and *indulgence*, in *ſports* and *gaming*, in vain expences and high living, becauſe theſe things cannot be turned into means of holineſs, or made ſo many parts of a wiſe and religious life.

* As he thus removes from all appearance of evil, ſo he aſpires after every inſtance of goodneſs. He does not aſk what is *allowable* and *pardonable*, but what is *commendable* and *praiſeworthy*. He does not aſk whether God will forgive the *folly* of our lives, the *madneſs* of our pleaſures, the *vanity* of our expences, and the careleſs conſumption of our *time*; but he aſks whether

whether God is pleaſed with theſe things; or whether theſe are the appointed ways of gaining his favour. He does not enquire, whether it be pardonable to hoard up money, to adorn ourſelves with diamonds, and gild our chariots, whilſt the *widow* and the *orphan*, the *ſick* and the *priſoner* want to be relieved; but he aſks whether God has required theſe things at our hands; whether we ſhall be called to account at the laſt day for the neglect of them? Becauſe it is not his intent to live in ſuch ways as God may *perhaps* pardon, but in ſuch as we know God will *infallibly* reward.

He will not therefore look at the lives of Chriſtians, to learn how he ought to ſpend his eſtate, but he will look into the ſcripture, and make every *doctrine*, *parable*, or *inſtruction* that relates to rich men, a *law* to himſelf in the uſe of it.

He will have but *one rule* for charity, and that will be, to ſpend all that he can that way; becauſe the Judge of quick and dead hath ſaid, all that is ſo given, is given to him.

7. Let not any one look upon this as an imaginary deſcription, that looks fine in the notion, but cannot be put in practice. For it is ſo far from being impracticable, that it has been practiſed by great numbers of Chriſtians in former ages, who were glad to turn their whole eſtates into a conſtant courſe of charity. And it is ſo far from being impoſſible now, that if we can

find any Chriſtians that ſincerely *intend to pleaſe God in all their actions, as the beſt and happieſt thing in the world*, whether they be young or old, ſingle or married, men or women, it will be impoſſible for them to do otherwiſe. This one principle will infallibly carry them to this, and they will find themſelves unable to ſtop ſhort of it.

For how is it poſſible for a man that *intends* to pleaſe God in the uſe of his *money*, becauſe he judges it to be his *greateſt happineſs*; to bury his money in *needleſs*, *impertinent* finery, in covering himſelf or his horſes with gold, whilſt there are any works of piety or charity to be done with it, or any ways of ſpending it well?

8. I have choſe to explain this matter, by appealing to this *intention*, becauſe it makes the caſe ſo plain, and becauſe every one may ſee it in the cleareſt light, and feel it in the ſtrongeſt manner, only by looking into his own heart. For it is as eaſy for every perſon to know, whether he *intends* to pleaſe God in all his actions, as for any *ſervant* to know, whether this be his intention towards his *maſter*. Every one alſo can eaſily tell how he lays out his money, and whether he conſiders how to pleaſe God in it, as he can tell where his eſtate is, and whether it be in *money* or in *land*. So that here is no plea left for *ignorance* or *frailty*, as to this matter; every body is in the *light*, and every body has *power*. And no one can fail, but he that is not

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ſo much a Chriſtian, as to *intend* to pleaſe God in the uſe of his eſtate.

9. You ſee two perſons, one is regular in *public* and *private* prayer, the other is not. Now the reaſon of this difference is not this, that one has *ſtrength* to obſerve prayer, and the other has not; but the reaſon is this, that one intends to pleaſe God in the duties of devotion, and the other has no intention about it. The caſe is the ſame in the right or wrong uſe of our *time* and *money*. You ſee one perſon throwing away his time in *ſleep* and *idleneſs*, in *viſiting* and *diverſions*, and his money in the moſt vain and unreaſonable expences. You ſee another careful of every day, dividing his hours by rules of reaſon and religion, and ſpending all his money in works of charity. Now the difference is not owing to this, that one has ſtrength to do thus, and the other has not; but to this, that one *intends to pleaſe* God in the right uſe of all his *time* and all his *money*, and the other has no intention about it.

10. Here therefore let us judge ourſelves ſincerely; let us not vainly content ourſelves with the common diſorders of our lives, the *vanity* of our expences, the *folly* of our diverſions, the *idleneſs* of our lives, and the *waſting* of our time, fancying that theſe are *ſuch imperfections* as we fall into thro' the unavoidable *weakneſs* of our natures; but let us be aſſured that theſe diſorders of our *common* life are owing to this, that we have not ſo much Chriſtianity as to intend to pleaſe God

in all our actions, as the beſt and happieſt thing in the world. So that we muſt not look upon ourſelves in a ſtate of common imperfection, but in ſuch a ſtate as wants the *firſt* and *moſt fundamental* principle of Chriſtianity, *viz. an intention to pleaſe God in all our actions.*

11. And if any one was to aſk himſelf how it comes to paſs, that there are any *degrees* of ſobriety which he neglects, any *method* of charity which he does not follow, any *rules* of redeeming time which he does not obſerve, his own heart will tell him, that it is becauſe he never *intended* to be ſo exact in thoſe duties. For whenever we fully intend it, it is as poſſible to conform to all this *regularity* of life, as it is poſſible for a man to obſerve *times* of prayer.

So that the fault does not lie here, that we deſire to be good and perfect, but thro' the weakneſs of our nature fall ſhort of it; but we have not piety enough to *intend* to be as good as we can, or to pleaſe God in *all our actions.* This we ſee is plainly the caſe of him that ſpends his time in *ſports*, when he ſhould be at *church*; it is not his want of power, but his want of *intention*, or deſire to be there.

12. And the caſe is plainly the ſame in every other folly of human life. She that ſpends her time and *money* in the unreaſonable ways and faſhions of the world, does not do ſo, becauſe ſhe wants power to be wiſe and religious in the management of her time and money, but becauſe

ſhe

ſhe has no *intention* or deſire of being ſo. When ſhe feels this intention, ſhe will find it as poſſible to act up to it, as to be ſtrictly *ſober* and *chaſte* becauſe it is her care and deſire to be ſo.

13. This doctrine does not ſuppoſe, that we have no need of divine grace, or that it is in our own power to make ourſelves perfect. It only ſuppoſes, that through the want of a *ſincere* intention of pleaſing God in *all our actions*, we fall into ſuch irregularities of life, as by the *ordinary* means of grace, we ſhould have power to avoid.

And that we have not that perfection, which our preſent ſtate of grace makes us capable of, becauſe we don't ſo much as intend to have it.

It only teaches us, that the reaſon why you ſee no *real* ſelf-denial, no *eminent* charity, no *profound* humility, no *heavenly* affection, no *true* contempt of the world, no *Chriſtian* meekneſs, no *ſincere* zeal, no *eminent* piety in the *common lives* of Chriſtians, is this, becauſe they don't ſo much as *intend to be exact and exemplary* in theſe virtues.

CHAP. III.

Of the great danger and folly of not intending *to be as eminent as we can, in the practice of all Chriſtian virtues.*

1. ALTHOUGH the goodneſs of God, and his rich mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, are a

ſufficient aſſurance to us, that he will be merciful to our unavoidable weakneſſes, that is, to ſuch failings as are the effects of *ignorance* or *ſurprize*; yet we have no reaſon to expect the ſame mercy towards thoſe ſins which we live in, through a want of *intention* to avoid them.

For inſtance, a *common ſwearer*, who dies in that guilt, ſeems to have no title to the divine mercy; becauſe he can no more plead any weakneſs in his excuſe, than the man that hid his *talent* in the earth, could plead his want of ſtrength to keep it out of the earth.

2. But, if this be right reaſoning in the caſe of a *common ſwearer*, that his ſin is not to be reckoned a *pardonable frailty*, becauſe he has no weakneſs to plead in its excuſe: why don't we as much condemn every other error of life, that has no more weakneſs to plead in its excuſe than common ſwearing?

For if this be ſo bad, becauſe it might be avoided, if we did but ſincerely intend it, muſt not all other erroneous ways of life be very guilty, if we live in them, not through weakneſs and inability, but becauſe we never ſincerely intended to avoid them?

For inſtance, you perhaps have made no progreſs in the moſt important Chriſtian virtues, in *humility* and *charity*. Now, if your failure is owing to your want of *intention* of performing them in any true degree, have you not as little to plead

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for yourself? And are you not as much without all excuse as the *common swearer?*

3. Why therefore don't you press these things home upon your conscience? Why do you not think it as dangerous for you to live in such defects as are in your power to amend, as 'tis dangerous for a common swearer to live in the breach of that duty, which it is in his power to observe? Is not the want of a sincere intention, as blameable in one case as another?

You, it may be, are as far from *Christian perfection* as the common swearer is from keeping the *third commandment.* Are you not therefore as much condemned by the doctrines of the gospel, as the swearer is by the third commandment?

You perhaps will say, that all people fall short of the perfection of the gospel. But this is nothing to the purpose: for the question is not, whether gospel perfection can be fully attained; but whether you come as near it as a sincere intention, and careful diligence can carry you? Whether you are not in a much lower state than you might be, if you sincerely intended to advance yourself in all Christian virtues?

If your defects in *piety*, *humility*, and *charity* are owing to your want of *sincere intention* to be as eminent as you can in these virtues, then you leave yourself as much without excuse, as he that lives in the sin of swearing, through the want of a sincere intention to depart from it.

4. The salvation of our souls is set forth in scripture as a thing of difficulty, that requires *all our diligence*, that is to be *worked out with fear and trembling*.

We are told, *straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it:* that *many are called, but few are chosen:* and that many will miss of their salvation who seem to have taken *some pains* to obtain it. *Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

* Here our blessed Lord commands us to *strive* to enter in, because many will fail, who only *seek* to enter: by which we are plainly taught, that religion is a state of *labour* and *striving*, and that many will fail of their salvation; not because they took no pains or care about it, but because they did not take care and pains enough; they only *sought*, but did not *strive* to enter in.

Every Christian therefore should as well examine his life by these *doctrines*, as by the commandments: for these doctrines are as plain marks of our condition as the commandments are.

For if salvation is only given to those who *strive* for it, then it is as reasonable for me to consider, whether my course of life be a course of striving to obtain it, as to consider whether I am keeping any of the commandments.

5. If my religion is only a formal compliance with thoſe modes of worſhip that are in faſhion where I live, if it coſts me no pains or trouble, if it lays me under no rules and reſtraints, if I have no careful thoughts about it, is it not great weakneſs to think that I am *ſtriving to enter in at the ſtraight gate?*

If I am ſeeking every thing that can delight my ſenſes, ſpending my time and fortune in pleaſures, in diverſions, and worldly enjoyments; a ſtranger to watchings, faſtings, prayers, and mortifications, how can it be ſaid, that I am *working out my ſalvation with fear and trembling?*

If I uſe the world and worldly enjoyments, as the generality of people do, and in all ages have done, why ſhould I think that I am amongſt *thoſe few*, who are walking in the *narrow way* to heaven?

* And yet, if the way is *narrow*, if none can walk in it but thoſe that *ſtrive*, is it not as neceſſary for me to conſider, whether the *way* I am in be narrow *enough*, or the *labour* I take to be a *ſufficient* ſtriving, as to conſider whether I ſufficiently obſerve the ſecond or third commandment?

6. The meaſure of our love to God ſeems in juſtice to be the meaſure of our love of every virtue. We are to love and practiſe it *with all our heart, with all our ſoul, with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength.* And when we ceaſe to live with this

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regard to virtue, we live below our nature, and inſtead of being able to plead our *infirmities*, we ſtand chargeable with wilful *negligence*.

It is for this reaſon that we are exhorted to work out our ſalvation with *fear* and *trembling*; becauſe unleſs our *heart* and *paſſions* are eagerly bent upon the work of our ſalvation, unleſs *holy fears* animate our endeavours, and keep our conſciences tender about every part of our duty, conſtantly examining how we live, and how fit we are to die, we ſhall in all probability ſit down in ſuch a courſe of life, as will never carry us to the rewards of heaven.

And he that conſiders, that a juſt God can only make ſuch allowances as are ſuitable to his juſtice, that our works are all to be examined by fire, will find *fear* and *trembling* are proper tempers for thoſe that are drawing near to ſo great a trial.

Now this is not intended to poſſeſs people's minds with a ſcrupulous anxiety; but to fill them with a juſt fear of living in the neglect of ſuch virtues as they will want at the day of judgment.

It is only deſiring them to be ſo apprehenſive of their ſtate, ſo earneſt after higher degrees of piety, and ſo fearful of falling ſhort of happineſs, as the great apoſtle St. *Paul* was, when he thus wrote to the *Philippians*.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect;—but this one thing I do, forgetting

forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God *in Chriſt Jeſus.* And then he adds, *Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.*

But if the apoſtle thought it neceſſary for thoſe who were in his ſtate of perfection to be *thus minded*; thus labouring, preſſing, and aſpiring after ſome degrees of holineſs, to which they were not then arrived; ſurely it is much more neceſſary for us, *to be thus minded*; thus earneſt and ſtriving after ſuch degrees of a holy life, as we have not yet attained.

7. The beſt way for any one to know how much he ought to aſpire after holineſs, is to aſk himſelf, how much he thinks will make him eaſy at the hour of death.

Now any man that dares put this queſtion to himſelf, will be forced to anſwer, that at death, every one will wiſh, he had been as perfect as human nature can be.

Is not this ſufficient to put us, not only upon wiſhing, but labouring after all that perfection which we ſhall then lament the want of? Is it not exceſſive folly to be content with ſuch a courſe of piety as we already know cannot content us, at a time when we ſhall ſo want it, as to have nothing elſe to comfort us? How can we carry a ſeverer condemnation againſt ourſelves, than to believe, that at the hour of death, we ſhall

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want the virtues of the *faints*, and wiſh that we had been among the firſt ſervants of God, and yet take no methods of arriving at their height of piety, whilſt we are alive?

8. Though this is an *abſurdity* that we can paſs over, whilſt the health of our bodies, the paſſions of our minds, the noiſe, and hurry, and pleaſures, and buſineſs of the world, lead us on with eyes that ſee not; yet at death, it will appear before us in a dreadful magnitude: it will haunt us like a diſmal ghoſt; and our conſcience will never let us take our eyes from it.

We ſee in worldly matters, what a torment ſelf-condemnation is; and how hardly a man is able to forgive himſelf, when he has brought himſelf into any calamity or diſgrace, purely by his own folly. The affliction is made doubly tormenting; if he is forced to charge it all upon himſelf, as his own act and deed, againſt the reaſon of things, and contrary to the advice of his friends.

Now by this we may in ſome degree gueſs, how terrible that ſelf-condemnation will be, when a man ſhall find himſelf in the miſery of death, under the ſeverity of a ſelf-condemning conſcience; charging all his diſtreſs upon his own folly and madneſs, againſt the ſenſe and reaſon of his own mind, againſt all the doctrines and precepts of religion, and contrary to all the inſtructions, calls, and warnings both of God and man.

9. * *Pen-*

9. * *Penitens* was a buſy, notable tradeſman, and very proſperous in his dealings, but died in the *thirty-fifth* year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, ſome of his neighbours came to ſee him; at which time he ſpoke thus to them.

I ſee, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances; and I know the thoughts that you have about me. You think how melancholy a caſe it is, to ſee ſo young a man, and in ſuch flouriſhing buſineſs, delivered up to death. And perhaps, had I viſited any of you in my condition, I ſhould have had the ſame thoughts of you.

But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts, than my condition is like yours.

It is no trouble to me now to think, that I am to die young, or before I have raiſed an eſtate.

Theſe things are now ſunk into ſuch mere *nothings*, that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days, or hours, I am to leave this carcaſe to be buried in the earth, and to find myſelf either for ever happy in the favour of God, or eternally ſeparated from all light and peace, Can any words ſufficiently expreſs the littleneſs of every thing elſe?

Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuſes us with the diſregard of theſe things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly ſtate, which is too *wiſe* and *buſy* to be at leiſure for theſe reflections?

10. When we conſider death as a miſery, we only think of it as a miſerable ſeparation from the enjoyments of this life. We ſeldom mourn over an old man that dies rich; but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progreſs of their fortune. You yourſelves look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a proſperous trade in the flower of my life.

This is the wiſdom of our manly thoughts: And yet what folly of the ſillieſt children is ſo great as this?

For what is there miſerable in death, but the conſequences of it? When a man is dead, what does any thing ſignify to him, but the ſtate he is then in?

Our poor friend *Lepidus* died, you know, as he was dreſſing himſelf for a *feaſt*. Do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? *Feaſts*, and *buſineſs*, and pleaſures, and *enjoyments*, ſeem great things to us, whilſt we think of nothing elſe; but as ſoon as we add death to them, they all ſink into an equal littleneſs; and the ſoul, that

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is separated from the body, no more laments the loss of business, than the losing of a *feast*.

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve, that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more *bargains*, or stood a little longer behind a *counter*?

And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches? If good angels were ready to receive my soul, could it be any grief to me, that I was dying upon a *poor bed* in a *garret*?

And if God has delivered me up to evil spirits, to be dragged by them to places of torment, could it be any comfort to me, that they found me upon a *bed of state*?

11. When you are as near death as I am, you will know, that all the different states of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatness or meanness, signify no more to you, than whether you die in a *poor* or *stately* apartment.

The greatness of those things which follow death, makes all that go before it sink into nothing.

Now that everlasting happiness or misery is come so near, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have

have no more to do with my happineſs than the cloaths I wore before I could ſpeak.

But, my friends, how am I ſurprized, that I have not always had theſe thoughts? For what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the neceſſities of piety, but what I might have as eaſily and fully ſeen in any part of my life?

What a ſtrange thing is it, that a little *health*, or the poor buſineſs of a *ſhop*, ſhould keep us ſo ſenſeleſs of theſe great things that are coming ſo faſt upon us!

12. Juſt as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with myſelf, what numbers of ſouls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time, ſurprized with a ſummons to the other world; ſome taken from their *ſhops* and *farms*, others from their *ſports* and *pleaſures*, theſe at *ſuits at law*, thoſe at *gaming-tables*, ſome on the *road*, others at their own *fire-ſides*; and all ſeized at an hour when they thought not of it; frighted at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, deſigns and projects, aſtoniſhed at the folly of their paſt lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort; their conſciences flying in their faces, bringing all their ſins to remembrance, preſenting them with the ſight of the angry Judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell,

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the powers of darkneſs, and the bitter pains of eternal death.

Oh my friends! bleſs God that you are not of this number, that you have time and ſtrength ſo to employ yourſelves, as may bring you peace at the laſt.

13. You, perhaps when you conſider that I have lived free from ſcandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the church, wonder to ſee me ſo full of remorſe and ſelf-condemnation at the approach of death.

It is true, I have lived in the communion of the church, and frequented its ſervice on *Sundays*, when I was not too *idle*, or otherwiſe diſpoſed of by my *buſineſs* and *pleaſures:* but then, my conformity to the public worſhip has been rather a thing of courſe, than from any real intention of glorifying God; had it been ſo, I had been more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

14. But the thing that now ſurprizes me above all wonders, is this, that I never had ſo much as a *general intention* of living up to the piety of the goſpel. This never ſo much as entered into my heart. I never once in my life conſidered, whether my way of life was ſuch as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

How eaſy a thing would ſalvation be, if it could fall into my careleſs hands, who have never had ſo much ſerious thought about it,

about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made?

Do you think any thing can aſtoniſh and confound a dying man like this? What pain do you think a man muſt feel, when his conſcience lays all this folly to his charge, when it ſhews him how regular, exact, and wiſe he has been in ſmall matters, that are paſſed away like a dream, and how ſtupid and ſenſeleſs he has lived without any reflection, in things of ſuch eternal moment, as no heart can ſufficiently conceive them?

Oh my friends! a careleſs life, unconcerned and inattentive to the duties of religion, is ſo without all excuſe, ſo unworthy of the mercy of God, ſuch a ſhame to the ſenſe and reaſon of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater puniſhment, than for a man to be thrown into the ſtate that I am in, to reflect upon it.

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth ſtopped by a *convulſion*, which never ſuffered him to ſpeak any more. He lay convulſed for about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghoſt.

CHAP. IV.

We can pleaſe God *in no ſtate or employment, but by* intending *and* devoting *it all to his glory.*

1. HAVING already ſtated the general nature of devotion, and ſhewn, that it implies not any *form of prayer*, but a certain form of

of life, that is offered to God, not at any particular *times* or *places*, but every where and in every thing; I shall now descend to some particulars, and shew how we are to devote our *labour* and *employment*, our *time* and *fortunes*, to God.

As a Christian should consider every place as holy, because God is there; so he should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness, because it is to be offered to God.

The profession of a *clergyman* is an holy profession, because it is a ministration in *holy things*. But worldly business is to be made holy, by being done as a service to God, and in conformity to his will.

For as all men, and all things in the world, as truly belong unto God, as any *places*, *things*, or *persons*, that are devoted to divine service; so all things are to be *used*, and all persons are to *act* in their several states for the glory of God.

Men of business therefore must not look upon themselves as at liberty to live to themselves, to sacrifice to their own *humours* and *tempers*, because their employment is of a worldly nature: but they must consider, that as the world, and all worldly professions, as truly belong to God as *persons* and *things* that are devoted to the *altar*; so it is as much the duty of men in worldly business to live wholly unto God, as 'tis the duty of those who are devoted to divine service.

2. As

2. As the whole world is God's; ſo the whole world is to act for God. As all men have the ſame *relation* to God, as all men have all their *powers* and *faculties* from God; ſo all men are obliged to act for God with all their *powers* and *faculties*.

* As all things are God's; ſo all things are to be uſed and regarded as the things of God. For *men* to abuſe things on *earth*, and live to themſelves, is the ſame rebellion againſt God as for *angels* to abuſe things in *heaven*; becauſe God is juſt the ſame Lord of all on earth, as he is of all in heaven.

Things may, and muſt differ in their *uſe*: but yet they are all to be uſed according to the will of God.

Men may, and muſt differ in their *employments*; but yet they muſt all act for the ſame ends, as dutiful ſervants of God, in the right and pious performance of their ſeveral callings.

3. *Clergymen* muſt live wholly to God in one *particular* way; that is, in the exerciſe of *holy offices*, in the miniſtration of *prayers* and *ſacraments*, and a zealous diſtribution of ſpiritual goods.

But men of other employments are, in their *particular* ways, as much obliged to act as the ſervants of God, and live wholly unto him in their ſeveral callings.

This is the only difference between clergymen and people of other callings.

* When

* When it can be ſhewn, that men may be vain, covetous, ſenſual, worldly-minded, or proud in the exerciſe of their worldly buſineſs, then it will be allowable for *clergymen* to indulge the ſame tempers in their ſacred profeſſions. For, tho' theſe tempers are moſt odious and moſt criminal in *clergymen*, who, beſides their baptiſmal vow, have a ſecond time devoted themſelves to God, to be his ſervants, not in the *common offices* of life, but in the ſervice of the moſt *holy* things; and who are therefore to keep themſelves as ſeparate from the *common* life of other men, as a *church* or an *altar* is to be kept ſeparate from houſes and tables of common uſe: yet as all Chriſtians are by their baptiſm *devoted* to God, and made profeſſors of holineſs; ſo are they all in their ſeveral callings to live as holy and heavenly perſons; doing every thing in their *common* life only in ſuch a manner, as it may be received by God, as a ſervice done to him. For things, ſpiritual and temporal, ſacred and common, muſt, like *men* and *angels*, like *heaven* and *earth*, all conſpire in the glory of God.

4. * As there is but one *God* and *Father of us all*, whoſe glory gives light and life to every thing that lives, whoſe preſence fills all places, whoſe power ſupports all beings, whoſe providence ruleth all events; ſo every thing that lives, whether in *heaven* or *earth*, whether they be *thrones* or *principalities*, *men* or *angels*, muſt all, with one Spirit, live wholly to the praiſe

and glory of this one God and Father of them all. *Angels* as *angels*, in their heavenly miniſtrations, but *men* as men, *women* as women, *biſhops* as biſhops, *prieſts* as prieſts, and *deacons* as deacons; ſome with things *ſpiritual*, and ſome with things *temporal*, offering to God the daily ſacrifice of a reaſonable life, wiſe actions, purity of heart, and heavenly affections.

This is the *common buſineſs* of all perſons in this world. It is not left to any *women* in the world to trifle away their time in the follies and impertinences of a *faſhionable life*, nor to any *men* to reſign themſelves up to worldly *cares* and *concerns*; it is not left to the *rich*, to gratify their paſſions in the *indulgences* and *pride* of life, nor to the *poor*, to vex and torment their hearts with the *poverty* of their ſtate; but *men* and women, rich and poor, muſt, with *biſhops* and *prieſts*, walk before God in the ſame wiſe and holy Spirit, in the ſame denial of all vain tempers, and in the ſame diſcipline and care of their ſouls; not only becauſe they have all the ſame rational nature, and are ſervants of the ſame God, but becauſe they all *want* the ſame holineſs to make them fit for the ſame happineſs. It is therefore abſolutely neceſſary for all Chriſtians, whether *men* or *women*, to conſider themſelves as perſons that are *devoted* to holineſs, and to order their *common ways of life* by ſuch rules of reaſon and piety as may turn it into a *continual ſervice* to Almighty God.

5. As

5. As the glory of God is *one* and the *ſame* thing; ſo whatever we do, ſuitable to it, muſt be done with *one* and the *ſame* Spirit. That ſame temper of mind which makes our *alms* and *devotions* acceptable, muſt alſo make our *labour*, or *employment*, a proper offering to God. If a man purſues his buſineſs, that he may raiſe himſelf to *figure* and *glory* in the world, he is no longer ſerving God in his employment; he is acting under other *maſters*, and has no more title to a reward from God, than he that gives *alms* that he may be *ſeen* of men. For vain and earthly deſires are no more allowable in our *employments*, than in our *alms* and *devotions*. For theſe tempers of worldly pride, and vain glory, are not only evil, when they mix with our good works; but they have the ſame evil nature, when they enter into our common buſineſs. If it were allowable to indulge *covetous* or *vain* paſſions in our worldly *employments*, it would be allowable to be vain-glorious in our *devotions*. But as our *alms* and *devotions* are not an acceptable ſervice, but when they proceed from a heart *truly devoted* to God; ſo our common employment cannot be reckoned a ſervice to him, but when it is performed with the ſame piety of heart.

6. * Moſt of the employments of life are in their own nature lawful; and all thoſe that are ſo, may be made a ſubſtantial part of our duty to God, if we engage in them only *ſo far*, and

for such *ends*, as are suitable to *beings*, that are to live *above* the world, all the time they live in the world. This is the *only measure* of our application to any worldly business; let it be what it will, or where it will, it must have no more of our *hands*, our *hearts*, or our *time*, than is consistent with an hearty, daily, careful preparation of ourselves for another life. For as all Christians, as such, have renounced this world, to prepare themselves by *daily* devotion, and *universal* holiness, for an eternal state of quite another nature, they must look upon worldly employments as upon *worldly wants*, and *bodily infirmities*; things not to be desired, but only to be endured till death and the resurrection have carried us to an eternal state of real happiness.

7. Now he that does not look at the things of this life in this *degree* of littleness, cannot be said either to feel or believe the greatest truths of Christianity. For, if he thinks any thing great or important in human business, can he be said to feel or believe those scriptures which represent this life, and the greatest things of life, as *bubbles*, *vapours*, *dreams* and *shadows*?

If he thinks *figure*, and *shew*, and worldly *glory*, to be any *proper* happiness of a Christian, how can he be said to feel or believe this doctrine, *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake?* For surely,

if

if there was any real happineſs in *figure*, and *ſhew*, and *worldly glory*; if theſe things deſerved our thoughts and care, it could not be matter of the *higheſt joy*, when we are torn from them by *perſecution* and *ſufferings*. If therefore a man will ſo live, as to ſhew, that he believes the moſt *fundamental* doctrines of Chriſtianity, he muſt live above the world; he muſt do the buſineſs of life, and yet live *wholly* unto God. And it is as neceſſary that people live in their employments with this *temper*, as it is neceſſary, that their employment itſelf be *lawful*.

8. * The *huſbandman* that tilleth the ground, is employed in an honeſt buſineſs, that is neceſſary in life, and very capable of being made an *acceptable ſervice* unto God: but if he labours and toils, not to ſerve any reaſonable ends of life, but in order to have his *plough* made of *ſilver*, and to have his *horſes* harneſſed in *gold*, the honeſty of his employment is loſt as to him, and his labour becomes his *folly*.

A *tradeſman* may juſtly think, that it is agreeable to the will of God for him to ſell ſuch things as are *uſeful* in *life*; ſuch as help both himſelf and others to a reaſonable ſupport, and enable them to aſſiſt thoſe that want to be aſſiſted: but if inſtead of this, it be his chief end in it to grow *rich*, that he may live in *figure* and *indulgence*, and be able to retire from buſineſs to *idleneſs* and *luxury*, his trade, as to him, loſes all its *innocency*, and is ſo far from being an accept-

able ſervice to God, that it is only a more plauſible courſe of *covetouſneſs*, *ſelf-love*, and *ambition*. For ſuch a one turns the neceſſities of his employment into pride and covetouſneſs, juſt as the *ſot* and *epicure* turn the neceſſities of eating and drinking into *gluttony* and *drunkenneſs*. Now he that is up early and late, that ſweats and labours for thoſe ends that he may be ſome time or other rich, and live in *pleaſure* and *indulgence*, lives no more to the glory of God than he that *plays* and *games* for the ſame ends. For though there is a great difference between *trading* and *gaming*; yet moſt of that difference is loſt, when men trade with the *ſame deſires* and *tempers*, and for the ſame ends that others game. *Charity* and *fine dreſſing* are things very different; but if men give *alms* for the ſame reaſons that others *dreſs fine*, only to be *ſeen* and *admired*, charity is then but like the vanity of *fine cloaths*. In like manner, if the ſame motives make ſome people induſtrious in their *trades*, which makes others conſtant at *gaming*, ſuch pains are but like the pains of gaming.

9. * *Calidus* has traded above thirty years in the greateſt city of the kingdom; he has been ſo many years conſtantly increaſing his *trade* and his *fortune*. Every hour of the day is with him an hour of buſineſs; and though he *eats* and *drinks* very heartily, yet every meal ſeems to be in a hurry, and he would ſay *grace* if he *had time*. *Calidus* ends every day at the *tavern*; but

but has not leiſure to be there till near nine o'clock. He is always forced to drink a good *hearty glaſs*, to drive thoughts of buſineſs out of his head, and make his ſpirits *drowſy* enough for ſleep. He does buſineſs all the time that he is riſing, and has ſettled ſeveral matters, before he can get to his *compting-houſe*. His prayers are a ſhort *ejaculation* or two, which he never miſſes in *ſtormy* weather, becauſe he has always ſomething or other at *ſea*. *Calidus* will tell you with great pleaſure, that he has been in this *hurry* for ſo many years, and that it muſt have killed him long ago, but that it has been a *rule* with him, to get out of the town every *Saturday*, and make the *Sunday* a day of *quiet* and good *refreſhment* in the country.

* He is now ſo rich that he would leave off his buſineſs, and amuſe his *old age* with building and furniſhing a fine houſe in the country; but that he is afraid he ſhould grow *melancholy*, if he was to quit his buſineſs. He will tell you with great gravity, that it is a dangerous thing for a man, that has been uſed to get money, ever to leave it off. If thoughts of religion happen at any time to *ſteal* into his head, *Calidus* contents himſelf with thinking, that he never was a friend to *heretics* and *infidels*; that he has always been civil to the *miniſter* of his pariſh, and very often given ſomething to the *charity-ſchools*.

10. * Now this way of life is at ſuch a *diſtance* from all the doctrines and diſcipline of Chriſ-

tianity, that no one can live in it through ignorance or frailty. *Calidus* can no more imagine, that *he is born again of the Spirit* †; that *he is in Christ a new creature* ‡; that he lives *here as a ſtranger and pilgrim, ſetting his affections upon things above, and laying up treaſures in heaven* ‖. He can no more imagine this, than he can think that he has been all his life an *apoſtle*, working *miracles*, and preaching the *goſpel*.

It muſt alſo be owned, that the *generality* of trading people, eſpecially in *great towns*, are too much like *Calidus*. You ſee them all the week buried in buſineſs, unable to think of any thing elſe; and then ſpending the *Sunday* in *idleneſs* and *refreſhment*, in wandering into the country, in ſuch viſits and jovial meetings as make it often the worſt day of the week.

11. Now they do not live thus, becauſe they cannot ſupport themſelves with *leſs care* and application to buſineſs; but they live thus becauſe they want to grow *rich* in their trades, and to maintain their families in ſome ſuch *figure* and degree of *finery*, as a *reaſonable Chriſtian* has no occaſion for. Take away but this *temper*, and then people of *all trades* will find themſelves at leiſure to live every day like Chriſtians, to be careful of every duty of the goſpel, to live in a viſible courſe of religion, and be every day ſtrict obſervers both of private and public prayer.

Now

† John iii. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 11. ‖ Coloſſ. iii. 1.

Now the only way to do this, is, for people to consider their trade as something that they are to *devote* to the glory of God, something that they are to do only in such a manner, as that they may make it a duty to him. Nothing can be right in *business*, that is not under these rules. The apostle commands servants, *to be obedient to their masters in singleness of heart as unto Christ: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of* God *from the heart* †. *With good-will, doing service as unto the Lord, and not unto men* ‡.

This passage sufficiently shews, that all Christians are to live wholly unto God in every state and condition; doing the work of their *common calling* in such a manner, and for such ends, as to make it a part of their *service* to God. For if *poor slaves* are not to comply with their business as *men-pleasers*, if they are to look wholly unto God in all their actions, and serve in *singleness* of *heart*, as unto the Lord; surely men of other conditions must be as much obliged to go through their business with the same *singleness* of *heart*; not as pleasing the vanity of their own minds, not as gratifying their own selfish, worldly passions, but as the servants of God in all that they have to do.

12. * It is therefore absolutely certain, that no Christian is to enter *any farther* into business, nor for any *other ends*, than such as he can, in

† Ephes. vi. 5. ‡ Colos. iii. 22, 23.

ſingleneſs of heart, offer unto God as a *reaſonable* ſervice. For the Son of God having redeemed us for this *only end*, that we ſhould, by a life of *reaſon* and *piety*, live to the glory of God; this is the only rule and meaſure for every order and ſtate of life. Without this *rule*, the moſt *lawful* employment becomes a *ſinful* ſtate of life.

* Take away this from the life of a *clergyman*, and his holy profeſſion ſerves only to expoſe him to the greater *damnation*. Take away this from *tradeſmen*, and ſhops are but ſo many houſes of greedineſs and filthy lucre. Take away this from *gentlemen*, and the courſe of their life becomes a courſe of ſenſuality, pride, and wantonneſs. Take away this rule from our *tables*, and all falls into gluttony and drunkenneſs. Take away this meaſure from our *dreſs* and *habits*, and all is turned into ſuch *paint*, and *glitter*, and ridiculous ornaments, as are a *real* ſhame to the wearer. Take away this from the uſe of our *fortunes*, and you will find people ſparing in nothing but charity. Take away this from our *diverſions*, and you will find no ſports too filly, nor any entertainments too vain and corrupt to be the pleaſures of Chriſtians.

13. If therefore we deſire to live unto God, it is neceſſary to bring our *whole life* under this law, to make his glory the ſole *rule* and *meaſure* of our acting in every employment of life. For there is no other *true devotion*, but this of living devoted

devoted to God in the common buſineſs of our lives.

* So that men muſt not content themſelves with the *lawfulneſs* of their employments; but muſt conſider whether they uſe them, as they are to uſe every thing, as ſtrangers and pilgrims, that are baptized into the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, that are to follow him in a *wiſe and heavenly* courſe of life, in the mortification of all worldly deſires, and in purifying and preparing their ſouls for the bleſſed enjoyment of God.

For to be vain, or proud, or covetous, or ambitious in the *common courſe* of our buſineſs, is as contrary to theſe holy tempers, as cheating and diſhoneſty.

If a *glutton* was to ſay, in excuſe of his gluttony, that he only eats ſuch things as it is *lawful* to eat, he would make as good an excuſe for himſelf as the greedy, covetous, ambitious tradeſman, that ſhould ſay, he only deals in lawful buſineſs. For as a Chriſtian is not only required to be honeſt, but to be of a Chriſtian *ſpirit*, and make his life an exerciſe of *humility*, *repentance*, and *heavenly* affection; ſo all tempers contrary to theſe, are as contrary to Chriſtianity, as *cheating* is contrary to *honeſty*.

14. All this is only to ſhew us the abſolute neceſſity of ſuch uniform piety, as extends to all the actions of our common life.

That we muſt *eat*, and *drink*, and *dreſs*, and *diſcourſe* according to the ſobriety of the Chriſtian ſpirit; engage in no employments but ſuch as we can truly devote unto God; nor purſue them any farther, than conduces to the reaſonable ends of a holy life.

That we muſt be *honeſt*, not only on particular occaſions, and in *ſuch* inſtances as are *applauded* in the world, eaſy to be performed, and free from *danger* or *loſs*, but from ſuch a *living principle* of juſtice, as makes us love truth and integrity in *all its inſtances*, follow it thro' all dangers, and againſt all oppoſition; as knowing that the more we pay for any truth, the better is our *bargain*, and that then our integrity becomes a *pearl*, when we have parted with *all* to keep it.

That we muſt be *humble*, not only in ſuch inſtances as are *expected* in the world, or *ſuitable* to our tempers, or confined to particular occaſions, but in ſuch a ſpirit, as renders us meek and holy in the *whole courſe* of our lives, as ſhews itſelf in our *dreſs*, our *perſon*, our *converſation*, our *enjoyment* of the world, *patience* under injuries, *ſubmiſſion* to ſuperiors, and condeſcenſion to thoſe that are below us, and in all the outward actions of our lives.

That we muſt not only devote *times* and *places* to prayer, but be every where in the *ſpirit* of devotion, with hearts always ſet towards heaven, looking up to God in all our actions, and doing every thing as ſervants living in the world, as in

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an holy temple of God; always worſhipping him, tho' not with our lips, yet with the *thankfulneſs* of our hearts, the *holineſs* of our actions, and the pious and charitable uſe of his gifts. That we muſt not only ſend up petitions and thoughts now and then to heaven; but muſt go thro' all our worldly buſineſs, with an heavenly ſpirit, as members of Chriſt's myſtical body, that, with new *hearts* and new *minds*, we are to turn an earthly life into a preparation for a life of greatneſs and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

15. Enough, I hope, has been ſaid, to ſhew you the neceſſity of thus introducing religion into *all the actions* of our *common life*, and of living and acting with the ſame regard to God in all that you do, as in your prayers and alms.

Eating is one of the loweſt actions of our lives; it is common to us with mere *animals:* yet we ſee that the piety of all the ages of the world, has turned this *ordinary* action of the animal life, into a *piety* to God, by making every meal to begin and end with devotion.

* We ſee yet ſome *remains* of this cuſtom in moſt Chriſtian families; ſome ſuch *little formality* as ſhews you, that people uſed to call upon God at the beginning and end of their meals. But indeed it is generally now ſo performed, as to look more like a mockery upon devotion, than any ſolemn application of the mind unto God. In one houſe you may perhaps ſee the *head* of the family juſt pulling off his hat; in another

another half getting up from his *ſeat*; another ſhall, it may be, proceed ſo far, as to make as if he ſaid *ſomething*: but however, theſe *little attempts* are the remains of ſome devotion that was formerly uſed at ſuch times, and are proofs that religion has formerly belonged to this part of *common life*.

But to ſuch a paſs are we now come, that tho' the cuſtom is ſtill preſerved, yet we can hardly bear with him, that ſeems to perform it with any degree of *ſerioufneſs*, and look upon it as a ſign of a *fanatical* temper, if a man has not done it as ſoon as he begins.

I would not be thought to plead for the neceſſity of *long prayers* at theſe times; but thus much I think may be ſaid, that if prayer is proper at theſe times, we ought to uſe ſuch *words* as ſhould ſhew, that we *ſolemnly* appeal to God for ſuch graces and bleſſings as are proper to the occaſion; otherwiſe the mock-ceremony, inſtead of bleſſing our victuals, does but accuſtom us to trifle with devotion, and give us a habit of being unaffected with our prayers.

17. If every *head* of a family would, at the return of every meal, make a *ſolemn adoration* of God, in ſuch a decent manner as becomes a devout mind, it would be very likely to teach him, that *ſwearing*, *ſenſuality*, *gluttony*, and *looſe* diſcourſe, were very improper at thoſe meals, which were to begin and end with devotion.

And

And if in these days of general corruption, this part of devotion is fallen into a *mock-ceremony*, it must be imputed to this, that *sensuality* and *intemperance* have got too great power over us, to suffer us to add any devotion to our meals. But thus much must be said, that when we are as pious as *Jews* and *Heathens* of all ages have been, we shall think it proper to pray at the beginning and end of our meals.

I have appealed to this pious custom of all ages as a proof of the reasonableness of the doctrine of this and the foregoing chapters; that is, as a proof that religion is to be the *rule* and *measure* of all the actions of our *ordinary* life. For surely, if we are not to *eat*, but under such rules of devotion, it must appear, that whatever else we do, must, in its proper way, be done with the same regard to the glory of God.

CHAP. V.

Persons that are free from the necessity of labour and employments, are to consider themselves as devoted to God in a higher degree.

1. GREAT part of the world are free from the necessities of labour, and have their *time* and *fortunes* in their own disposal.

But as no one is to live in his *employment* according to his own humour, or to please his own fancy, but is to do all his business in such a manner

ner as to make it a ſervice unto God; ſo thoſe who have no particular employment, are ſo far from being left at liberty to live to themſelves, to purſue their own humours, and ſpend their time and fortune as they pleaſe, that they are under greater obligations of living wholly unto God in all their actions.

The *freedom* of their ſtate lays them under a greater *neceſſity* of always chuſing and doing the beſt things.

They are thoſe, of whom *much will be required*, becauſe *much is given unto them*.

A *ſlave* can only live unto God in one particular way; that is, by religious patience and ſubmiſſion in his ſtate of ſlavery.

But all ways of holy living, all inſtances, and all kinds of virtue, lie open to thoſe who are maſters of themſelves, their time, and their fortune.

It is as much the duty, therefore, of ſuch perſons, to make a wiſe uſe of their liberty, to devote themſelves to all kinds of virtue, to aſpire after every thing that is holy and pious, and to pleaſe God in the higheſt and moſt perfect manner, as it is the duty of a *ſlave* to be *reſigned* unto God in his ſtate of ſlavery.

2. You are no *labourer*, or *tradeſman*; you are neither *merchant* nor *ſoldier*; conſider yourſelf therefore as placed in a ſtate, in ſome degree like that of *good angels*, who are ſent into the world as *miniſtring ſpirits*, for the general good of

of mankind, to *aſſiſt*, *protect*, and *miniſter* for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation.

For the more you are free from the *common* neceſſities of *men*, the more you are to imitate the *higher* perfections of *angels*.

Had you, *Serena*, been obliged to waſh cloaths for your maintenance, or to wait upon ſome *miſtreſs*, that demanded all your *labour*, it would be your duty to glorify God, by ſuch *humility*, *obedience*, and *faithfulneſs*, as might adorn that ſtate of life.

It would then be recommended to your care, to improve that *one talent* to its greateſt height; that when the time came for mankind to be rewarded for their labours by the great Judge of the quick and dead, you might be received with a *well done good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

But as God has given you *five talents*, as he has placed you above the neceſſities of life, as he has left you in the happy liberty of chuſing the moſt exalted ways of virtue; as he has left you nothing to do, but to make the beſt uſe of variety of bleſſings, to make the beſt of a ſhort life, to ſtudy your own perfection, the honour of God, and the good of your neighbour; ſo it is now your duty to enquire how the moſt eminent ſaints have lived, to ſtudy all the *arts* and *methods* of perfection, and to ſet no bounds to your love and gratitude to the bountiful author of ſo many bleſſings.

3. It is now your duty to turn your *five talents* into five more, and to consider how your *time*, and *leisure*, and *health*, and *fortune* may be made so many happy means of purifying your own soul, improving your fellow-creatures, and of carrying you at last to the greatest heights of eternal glory.

As you have no *mistress* to serve, so let your own soul be the object of your daily care and attendance.

Nourish it with *good works*, give it peace in *solitude*, get it strength in *prayer*, make it wise with *reading*, enlighten it by *meditation*, make it tender with *love*, sweeten it with *humility*, enliven it with *psalms* and *hymns*, and comfort it with frequent *reflections* upon future glory. Keep it in the presence of God, and teach it to imitate those *guardian angels*; which tho' they attend on the lowest of mankind, yet *always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven.*

This, *Serena*, is your profession. For as sure as God is one God, so sure it is, that he has but one command to all mankind, whether they be bond or free, rich or poor; and that is, to act up to the *excellency* of their nature, to live by *reason*, to walk in the *light* of religion, to glorify God in all his *gifts*, and dedicate every condition of life to his service.

This is the *one common* command of God to all mankind. If you have an employment, you are to be thus reasonable, and holy in the exercise

ciſe of it; if you have time and a fortune in your own power, you are to be thus reaſonable, and holy, in the uſe of all your time and all your fortune.

4. The right uſe of every talent, is the indiſpenſable duty of every being that is capable of knowing right or wrong.

For the reaſon why we are to do *any thing* as unto God, and with regard to our relation to him, is the ſame reaſon why we are to do *every thing* as unto God, and with regard to this relation.

That which is a reaſon for our being *wiſe* and *holy* in the diſcharge of all our *buſineſs*, is the ſame reaſon for our being wiſe and holy in the uſe of all our *money*.

* As we have always the *ſame natures*, and are every where the ſervants of the ſame God; as every place is equally full of his preſence, and every thing is equally his gift; ſo we muſt do every thing as the ſervants of God; we muſt live in every place, as in his preſence; we muſt uſe every thing as that ought to be uſed which belongs to God.

Either this wiſdom, and devotion is to go thro' every way of life, or it is to go through no part of life.

If we might forget *ourſelves*, or forget God; if we might live by humour or fancy in any thing, or at any time, or in any place, it would be as lawful

lawful to do the ſame in every thing, and every time, and every place.

5. If therefore ſome people, fancy, that they muſt be grave and ſolemn at *church*, but may be *ſilly* and *frantic* at home; that they muſt live by ſome rule on the *Sunday*, but may ſpend other days by chance; that they muſt have ſome times of prayer, but may waſte the reſt of their time as they pleaſe; that they muſt give ſome money in *charity*, but may ſquander away the reſt as they have a mind; ſuch people have not conſidered the nature of religion, or the true reaſons of piety. For he that, upon principles of reaſon, can tell why it is good to be wiſe and heavenly-minded at *church*, can tell that 'tis good to have the *ſame tempers* in all other places. He that knows why he ſhould ſpend any time well, knows it is never allowable to throw any time away. He that rightly underſtands the reaſonableneſs of *charity*, will know that it can never be excuſable, to waſte any of our money in pride and folly, or in any needleſs expences.

For every argument that ſhews the wiſdom of charity, proves the wiſdom of ſpending all our fortune well. Every argument that proves the reaſonableneſs of having times of prayer, ſhews the reaſonableneſs of loſing none of our time.

6. * If any one can ſhew, that we need not *always* act in the divine preſence, that we need not uſe *every thing* as the gift of God, that we need not *always* live by reaſon, and make religion

gion the rule of all our actions, the same arguments would shew, that we need *never* act as in the presence of God, nor make religion and reason the measure of *any* of our actions. If therefore we are to live to God at any time, or in any place, we are to live unto him at all times, and in all places. If we are to use any thing as the gift of God, we are to use every thing as his gift. If we are to do any thing by strict rules of reason and piety, we ought to do every thing in the same manner; because *reason*, and *wisdom*, and piety are as much the best things at *all times*, and in *all places*, as they are the best things at *any time*, or in *any* place.

If it is our glory and happiness to have a *rational nature*, that is endued with wisdom and reason, that is capable of imitating the divine nature; then it must be our glory and happiness, to improve our reason and wisdom, to act up to the excellency of our rational nature, and to imitate God in all our actions. They, therefore, who confine their religion to *times* and *places*, and some little rules of *retirement*, who think that it is being too strict to introduce religion into *common life*, and make it give laws to all their actions and ways of living; they who think thus, not only mistake, but they mistake the *whole nature* of religion, who can think any part of their life is more easy, for being free from it. They may well be said to mistake the *whole nature* of wisdom, who don't think it desirable to be *always* wise. He has not learned the *nature* of piety, who

who thinks it too much to be pious in all his actions. He does not ſufficiently underſtand what *reaſon* is, who does not earneſtly deſire to live in every thing according to it.

If we had a religion that conſiſted in abſurd ſuperſtitions, that had no regard to the perfection of our nature, people might well be glad to have ſome part of their life excuſed from it: but as the religion of the goſpel is only the refinement of our beſt faculties, as it only requires a life of the higheſt reaſon, as it only requires us to uſe this world, as in reaſon it ought to be uſed, to live in ſuch *tempers* as are the glory of intelligent beings, to walk in ſuch wiſdom as exalts our nature, and to practiſe ſuch piety as will raiſe us to God; who can think it grievous, to live *always* in the *ſpirit* of ſuch a religion, to have *every part* of his life full of it, but he that would think it much more grievous, to be as the angels of God in heaven?

7. Farther, as God is one and the ſame being, always acting like himſelf, and ſuitable to his own nature; ſo it is the duty of every being that he has created, to live according to the nature that he has given it, and *always* to act like itſelf.

It is therefore an immutable law of God, that all rational beings ſhould act *reaſonably* in *all* their actions; not at this *time*, or in that *place*, or upon this occaſion, or in the uſe of ſome particular thing; but at *all* times, in *all* places, at *all* occaſions, and in the uſe of *all* things.

When,

When, therefore, any being that is endued with reaſon, does an *unreaſonable* thing at any time, or in any place, or in the uſe of any thing, it ſins againſt the *great law* of its nature, and againſt God the author of that nature.

They, therefore, who plead for any *fooliſh* faſhions, *cuſtoms* and *humours*, for the miſuſe of our *time* or *money*, plead for a rebellion againſt our nature, for a rebellion againſt God, who has given us reaſon for no other end, than to make it the *rule* and *meaſure* of all our ways of life.

8. When, therefore, you are guilty of any *folly* or *extravagance*, or indulge any *vain* temper, don't conſider it as a ſmall matter; but conſider it as it is, acting *contrary* to your *nature*; and then you will ſee that there is nothing *ſmall* that is *unreaſonable*, becauſe all unreaſonable ways are contrary to the nature of all rational beings.

The infirmities of human life make ſuch *food* and *raiment* neceſſary for us as *angels* do not want; but it is no more allowable for us to turn theſe neceſſities into *follies*, and indulge ourſelves in the luxury of *food*, or the vanities of *dreſs*, than it is allowable for *angels* to act below the dignity of their proper ſtate. For a reaſonable life, is as much the duty of all *men*, as it is the duty of all *angels*. Theſe are not *ſpeculative* flights, but plain and *undeniable laws*, that are founded in the *nature* of rational beings, who,

as

as ſuch, are obliged to live by reaſon, and glorify God by a continual right uſe of their ſeveral talents. So that tho' men are not *angels*; yet they may know by what rules men are to act, by conſidering the ſtate of angels. Our bleſſed Saviour has plainly turned our thoughts this way, by making this petition, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* A plain proof, that the obedience of *men* is to imitate the obedience of *angels*; and that rational beings on earth are to live unto God, as rational beings in heaven live unto him.

9. When, therefore, you would repreſent to your mind how Chriſtians ought to live unto God, and by what degrees of wiſdom and holineſs they ought to uſe the things of this life, you muſt not look at the world; but you muſt look up to the ſociety of angels, and think what wiſdom and holineſs is fit to prepare you for ſuch a ſtate of glory. You muſt look to all the *higheſt precepts* of the goſpel; you muſt examine yourſelf by the *Spirit* of Chriſt; you muſt think how *departed ſouls* would live, if they were again to act the ſhort part of human life; and what degrees of wiſdom and holineſs you will wiſh for when you are leaving the world.

10. And as Chriſtianity conſecrates all *ſtates* and *employments* to God, as it requires us to aſpire after univerſal obedience, doing and uſing every thing as the ſervants of God; ſo are we

more

more eſpecially obliged to obſerve this exactneſs in the uſe of our *eſtates* and *fortunes*.

The reaſon is plain, if we only conſider, that our *eſtate* is as much the gift of God, as our *eyes*, or our *hands*, and is no more to be buried, or thrown away at pleaſure, than we are to pull out our eyes, or throw away our limbs.

But beſides this conſideration, there are ſeveral other important reaſons why we ſhould be exact in the uſe of our eſtates.

11. * *Firſt*, becauſe the manner of uſing our money, enters ſo far into the buſineſs of every day, and makes ſo great a part of our common life, that our *common life* muſt be much of the ſame nature, as our *common way* of ſpending our eſtate. If reaſon and religion govern us in this, then reaſon and religion have got great hold of us; but if *humour*, *pride*, and *fancy* are the meaſures of our ſpending our eſtate, then humour, pride, and fancy will have the direction of the greateſt part of our life.

12. Another reaſon is, becauſe our money is capable of being uſed to the moſt excellent purpoſes, and is ſo great a means of doing good. If we waſte it, we don't waſte a trifle that ſignifies little; but we waſte that which might be as eyes to the *blind*, as a huſband to the *widow*, as a father to the *orphan*. If a man had *eyes*, and *hands*, and *feet*, that he could give to thoſe that wanted them; if he ſhould either lock them up in a *cheſt*, or pleaſe himſelf with ſome *needleſs* or *ridi-*

culous uſe of them, inſtead of giving them to his brethren that were *blind* and *lame*, ſhould we not juſtly reckon him an inhuman wretch? If he ſhould rather chuſe to amuſe himſelf with *furniſhing* his houſe with thoſe things, than to intitle himſelf to an eternal reward, by giving them to thoſe that wanted *eyes* and *hands*, might we not juſtly reckon him mad?

Now *money* has much the nature of *eyes* and *feet:* if we either lock it up in *cheſts*, or waſte it in *needleſs* and *ridiculous* expences whilſt the poor and the diſtreſſed want it for their neceſſary uſes; if we conſume it in the *ridiculous ornaments* of apparel, whilſt others are ſtarving in *nakedneſs*, we are not far from the cruelty of him that chuſes rather to adorn his houſe with the *hands* and *eyes*, than to give them to thoſe that want them. If we indulge ourſelves in ſuch expenſive enjoyments, to ſatisfy no *real want*, rather than to entitle ourſelves to an eternal reward, by diſpoſing of our money well, we are guilty of his madneſs, that rather chuſes to lock up *eyes* and *hands*, than to make himſelf for ever bleſſed, by giving them to thoſe that want them.

13. * *Thirdly*, if we waſte our money, we are not only guilty of making that uſeleſs, which is ſo powerful a means of doing good, but we turn this uſeful talent into a powerful means of corrupting ourſelves; becauſe ſo far as it is ſpent *wrong*, ſo far it is ſpent in the ſupport of ſome

wrong

wrong temper, in gratifying ſome vain and unreaſonable deſires.

* As *wit* and *fine parts* cannot be only loſt, but expoſe thoſe that have them to greater follies, if they are not ſtrictly devoted to piety; ſo *money*, if it is not uſed ſtrictly according to reaſon and religion, cannot only be trifled away, but it will betray people into *greater* follies, and make them live a more ſilly and extravagant life, than they would have done without it. If therefore you don't ſpend your money in doing good to others, you ſpend it to the hurt of yourſelf. You will act like a man that ſhould refuſe to give a *cordial* to a ſick friend, tho' he could not drink it himſelf without *inflaming* his blood. For this is the caſe of *ſuperfluous* money; if you give it to thoſe that want it, it is a *cordial*; if you ſpend it upon yourſelf, in ſomething that you do not want, it only *inflames* and diſorders your mind, and makes you worſe than you would be without it.

14. Conſider again the fore-mentioned compariſon; if the man that would not make a right uſe of ſpare *eyes* and *hands*, ſhould, by continually trying to uſe them himſelf, ſpoil his own eyes and hands, we might accuſe him of ſtill greater madneſs.

Now this is truly the caſe of riches ſpent upon ourſelves in *vain* and *needleſs* expences: in trying to uſe them where they have no real uſe, we

only use them to our hurt, in creating unreasonable desires, in nourishing ill tempers, in indulging our passions, and supporting a vain turn of mind. For high *eating* and *drinking*, fine *cloaths*, and fine *houses*, state and equipage, gay *pleasures* and *diversions*, do all of them hurt and disorder our hearts; they are the food and nourishment of all the folly and weakness of our nature, and are certain means to make us vain and worldly in our tempers; they are all of them the support of something that ought not to be supported; they are contrary to that sobriety of heart which relisheth divine things; they are like so many weights upon our mind, that make us less able, and less inclined to raise up our thoughts and affections to the things that are above.

So that money, thus spent, is not merely *wasted*, but spent to bad purposes; to the corruption of our hearts, and make us less able to live up to the doctrines of the gospel. It is like keeping money from the poor, to buy poison for ourselves.

For so much as is spent in the vanity of *dress*, is so much laid out to *fix* vanity in our minds. So much as is laid out for *idleness* and *indulgence*, is so much given to render our hearts *dull* and *sensual*. So much as is spent in *state* and *equipage*, is so much spent to *dazzle* your own eyes, and render you the idol of your own imagination. And so in every thing, when you go from *reasonable* wants, you only support some unreasonable

ble *temper*, some *turn* of mind, which every Christian is called upon to *renounce*.

So that, whether we consider our fortune as a trust from God, or the *great good* it enables us to do, or the great harm that it does to ourselves, if idly spent; on all these accounts it is absolutely necessary to make reason and religion the strict rule of using all our fortune.

15. Every exhortation in scripture to satisfy only such wants as God would have satisfied; every exhortation to be spiritual and heavenly, pressing after a glorious change of our nature; every exhortation to love our neighbours as ourselves, is a command to be *strictly religious* in the use of our money. This use of our worldly goods, is so much the doctrine of the New Testament, that you cannot read a chapter without being taught something of it. I shall only produce one passage of scripture, which is sufficient to justify all that I have said.

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and

ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked and ye cloathed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall he ſay unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal.

16. I have quoted this paſſage at length, becauſe if one looks at the way of the world, one would hardly think Chriſtians had ever read this ſcripture.

Some people look upon this text only as a general recommendation of *occaſional* works of *charity*; whereas it ſhews the neceſſity, not only of occaſional charities, but of ſuch an *entire charitable life*, as is a continual exerciſe of all ſuch works of charity as we are able to perform.

You own that there is no ſalvation but in the performance of theſe good works. Who is it, therefore, that may be ſaid to have performed theſe good works? Is it he that has *ſometime* aſſiſted a *priſoner*, or relieved the poor or ſick? This would be as abſurd as to ſay, that he had performed the duties of *devotion*, who had ſometime ſaid his prayers. Is it, therefore, he that has *ſeveral times* done theſe works of charity? This can no more

more be ſaid, than he can be ſaid to be the truly *juſt* man, who had done acts of juſtice *ſeveral times*. What is the rule therefore, or meaſure, of performing theſe good works?

Now the rule is very *plain* and *eaſy*, and ſuch as is *common* to every other *virtue*, as well as to charity. Who is the humble, or meek, or juſt, or faithful man? Is it he that has *ſeveral times* done acts of humility, meekneſs, juſtice, or fidelity? No; but it is he that lives in the *habitual exerciſe* of theſe virtues. In like manner, he only can be ſaid to have performed thoſe works of charity, who lives in the *habitual exerciſe* of them to the utmoſt of his power. He only has performed the duty of divine love, who loves God with all his heart, and *mind*, and *ſtrength*. And he only has performed the duty of theſe good works, who has done them with all his heart, and mind, and ſtrength. For there is no other meaſure of our doing good, than our power of doing it.

17. The apoſtle *Peter* puts this queſtion to our bleſſed Saviour, *Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him, till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee until ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven:* Not as if after this number of offences, a man might then ceaſe to forgive; but the expreſſion is to ſhew us, that we are not to bound our forgiveneſs by *any number* of offences, but are to *continue* forgiving the moſt repeated offences

againſt us. If therefore a man ceaſes to forgive his brother, becauſe he has forgiven him *often* already: if he excuſes himſelf from forgiving this man, becauſe he has forgiven *ſeveral others*, ſuch a one breaks this law of Chriſt, concerning the forgiving one's brother.

Now the rule of *forgiving* is alſo the rule of *giving*. You are not to *give*, or do good to *ſeven*, but to *ſeventy times ſeven*. You are not to ceaſe from giving, becauſe you have given often to the ſame perſon, or to other perſons; but muſt account yourſelf as much obliged to continue relieving thoſe that continue in want, as you was obliged to relieve them once or twice. Had it not been in your power, you had been excuſed from relieving any perſon *once*; but if it is in your power to relieve people *often*, it is as much your duty to do it often as it is the duty of others to do it but ſeldom, becauſe they are but ſeldom able.

18. And the reaſon of all this is plain; there is the ſame *neceſſity* of being charitable at one time as at another. It is as much the beſt uſe of our money, to be *always* doing good with it, as it is the beſt uſe of it at any *particular time*; ſo that that which is a reaſon for a charitable *action*, is as good a reaſon for a charitable *life*; for charity has nothing to recommend it to-day, but what will be the ſame recommendation of it to-morrow; and you cannot neglect it at one time, without being guilty of the ſame ſin as if you

you neglected it at another time. As ſure, therefore, as theſe works of charity are neceſſary to ſalvation, ſo ſure is it that we are to do them to the utmoſt of our power; not to-day, or to-morrow, but through the whole *courſe* of our life. If therefore it be our duty at any time to deny ourſelves any *needleſs* expences, that we may have to give to thoſe that want, it is as much our duty to do ſo at all times, that we may be able to do more good: for if it is at any time a ſin to prefer *needleſs* expence to works of charity, it is ſo at all times. If it is ever neceſſary to take care of theſe works of charity, and to ſee that we make ourſelves in ſome degree capable of doing them; it is as neceſſary to take care to make ourſelves as capable as we can be, of performing them in all the parts of our life.

19. Either therefore you muſt ſay, that you need never perform any of theſe good works; or you muſt own, that you are to perform all your life in as high a degree as you are able. There is no middle way any more than there is a middle way between temperance and intemperance. If you do not ſtrive to fulfil all charitable works, if you neglect any of them that are in your power, let it be when it will, or where it will, you number yourſelf amongſt thoſe that want Chriſtian charity; becauſe it is as much your duty to do good with all that you

have, as it is your duty to be temperate in all that you eat or drink.

20. Hence appears the *neceſſity* of renouncing all thoſe *fooliſh* and *unreaſonable* expences, which the folly of mankind has made ſo common and faſhionable in the world. For if it is neceſſary to do good works as far as you are able, it muſt be as neceſſary to renounce thoſe needleſs ways of ſpending money, which render you unable to do works of charity.

You muſt therefore no more conform to theſe ways of the world, than you muſt conform to the vices of the world. You muſt no more ſpend with thoſe that idly waſte their money as their own humour leads them, than you muſt drink with the drunken; becauſe a courſe of ſuch expences is no more conſiſtent with a life of *charity*, than exceſs in drinking is conſiſtent with a *life of ſobriety*. When therefore any one tells you of the lawfulneſs of expenſive apparel, or the innocency of pleaſing yourſelf with coſtly ſatisfactions, only imagine that the ſame perſon was to tell you, that you need not do works of charity, that Chriſt does not require you to do good to your poor brethren, as unto him, and then you will ſee the wickedneſs of ſuch advice; for, to tell you that you may live in ſuch expences, as make it impoſſible for you to live in the exerciſe of good works, is the ſame thing as telling you, that you need not have any care about ſuch good works themſelves.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

How the imprudent uſe of an eſtate *corrupts all the tempers, and fills the heart with poor and ridiculous paſſions; repreſented in the character of* Flavia.

1. IT has already been obſerved, that a religious care is to be uſed in the manner of of ſpending our *money* or *eſtate*; becauſe the manner of ſpending our eſtate makes ſo great a part of our common life, and is ſo much the buſineſs of every day, that, according as we are wiſe or imprudent in this, the *whole courſe* of our *lives* will be wiſe, or full of folly.

Perſons that receive inſtructions of piety with *pleaſure*, often wonder that they make no farther progreſs in that religion which they ſo much *admire*.

Now the reaſon is this: religion lives only in their *head*, but ſomething elſe has poſſeſſion of their hearts; and therefore, they continue from *year* to *year* mere *admirers* and *praiſers* of piety, without ever coming up to its precepts.

2. If it be aſked, why religion does not get poſſeſſion of their hearts? It is not becauſe they live in *groſs ſins* or *debaucheries*; but becauſe their *hearts* are conſtantly *employed*, *perverted*, and kept in a wrong ſtate, by the *indiſcreet uſe* of ſuch things as are *lawful*.

The use and enjoyment of their estates is *lawful*, and therefore it never comes into their heads to imagine any danger from that quarter. They never reflect that there is a *vain* and *imprudent* use of their estates: which, though it does not destroy like *gross sins*, yet so *disorders* the heart, and supports it in such *sensuality* and *dullness*, as makes it incapable of receiving the life and spirit of piety.

For our souls may be rendered incapable of all virtue, merely by the use of *innocent* and *lawful* things.

3. What is more innocent than *rest?* And yet what more dangerous than sloth and idleness? What is more lawful than *eating* and *drinking?* And yet what more destructive of all virtue, and fruitful of all vice, than *sensuality*.

Now, it is for want of exactness in the use of these *innocent* and *lawful things*, that religion cannot get possession of our hearts: and it is in the right management of ourselves, as to these things, that the *art* of holy living chiefly consists.

4. *Gross sins* are plainly seen, and easily avoided by persons that profess religion: but the *indiscreet* use of innocent and lawful things, as it does not *shock* our consciences, so it is difficult to make people at all sensible of the danger of it.

A *gentleman* that expends all his estate in *sports*, and a *woman* that lays out all her fortune upon herself,

herſelf, can hardly be perſuaded that the ſpirit of religion cannot ſubſiſt in ſuch a way of life.

Theſe perſons may live free from debaucheries; they may be friends of religion, ſo far as to *praiſe* and *ſpeak* well of it: but it cannot govern their hearts, and be the ſpirit of their actions, till they change their way of life.

For a *woman* that loves *dreſs*, that thinks no expence too great to beſtow upon the *adorning* of her perſon, cannot ſtop there; for that temper draws a *thouſand* other follies along with it, and will render the whole courſe of her life, her *buſineſs*, her *converſation*, her *hopes*, her *fears*, her *taſte*, her *pleaſures* and *diverſions*, all ſuitable to it.

5. * *Flavia* and *Miranda* are two maiden ſiſters, that have each of them *two hundred pounds* a year: they buried their parents twenty years ago, and have ſince that time ſpent their eſtate as they pleaſed.

* *Flavia* has been the wonder of all her friends, for her excellent management, in making ſo ſurprizing a figure in ſo moderate a fortune. Several *ladies* that have twice her fortune, are not able to be always ſo *genteel*, and ſo conſtant at all places of *pleaſure* and *expence*. She has every thing that is in the *faſhion*, and is in every place where there is any *diverſion*. *Flavia* is very *orthodox*; ſhe talks warmly againſt *heretics* and *ſchiſmatics*, is generally at *church*, and often at the *ſacrament*. She once commended a *ſermon* that

that was againſt the *vanity* of dreſs, and thought it was very juſt againſt *Lucinda*, whom ſhe takes to be a great deal finer than ſhe need be. If any one aſks *Flavia* to do ſomething in charity, if ſhe likes the perſon that makes the propoſal, or happens to be in a right *temper*, ſhe will toſs him *half a crown*, or a *crown*; and tell him, if he knew what a *long millener's bill* ſhe had juſt received, he would think it a great deal for her to give. A *quarter* of a year after this, ſhe hears a *ſermon* upon the *neceſſity* of charity; ſhe thinks the man preaches well; that it is a very *proper* ſubject; that people want much to be put in mind of it; but ſhe applies nothing to herſelf, becauſe ſhe remembers that ſhe gave a *crown* ſometime ago when ſhe could ſo ill ſpare it.

6. As for *poor* people themſelves, ſhe will admit of no complaints from them: ſhe is very poſitive they are all *cheats* and *liars*, and will ſay any thing to get relief; and therefore, it muſt be a ſin to encourage them in their evil ways.

You would think *Flavia* had the tendereſt conſcience in the world, if you was to ſee how *ſcrupulous* ſhe is of the guilt and danger of *giving* amiſs.

7. She buys all books of *wit* and *humour*, and has made an expenſive collection of all our *Engliſh poets*. For ſhe ſays, one cannot have a *true taſte* of any of them, without being converſant with them all.

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She will ſometimes read a *book* of *piety*, if it is a ſhort one, if it is much commended for *ſtile* and *language*, and ſhe can tell where to *borrow* it.

Flavia is very *idle*, and yet very fond of *fine work*. This makes her often *ſit* working in *bed* until *noon*, and be told many a *long ſtory* before ſhe is up; ſo that I need not tell you her morning devotions are not *always* rightly performed.

Flavia would be a *miracle* of piety, if ſhe was but half ſo careful of her ſoul as ſhe is of her body. The riſing of a *pimple* in her face, the ſting of a *gnat*, will make her keep her room two or three days; and ſhe thinks they are very *raſh* people, that don't take care of things in time. This makes her ſo over-careful of her *health*, that ſhe never thinks ſhe is well enough; and ſo *over-indulgent*, that ſhe can never be really well. So that it coſts her a great deal in *ſleeping-draughts* and *waking-draughts*, in *ſpirits* for the head, in *drops* for the nerves, in *cordials* for the ſtomach, and in *ſaffron* for her *tea*.

8. If you viſit *Flavia* on the *Sunday* you will always meet *good company*: you will know what is doing in the world; you will hear the laſt *lampoon*, be told who wrote it, and who is meant by every name that is in it. You will hear what *plays* were acted that week, which is the fineſt ſong in the *opera*, who was intolerable at the laſt aſſembly, and what games are moſt in faſhion. *Flavia* thinks they are *Atheiſts* that play at *cards*

on

on the *Sunday*; but ſhe will tell you the *nicety* of all the games, what cards ſhe held, how ſhe *played* them, and the *hiſtory* of all that happened at *play*, as ſoon as ſhe comes from *church*. If you would know who is *rude* and *ill-natured*, who is *vain* and *foppiſh*, who lives too *high*, and who is in *debt*; if you would know what is the quarrel at a *certain houſe*, or who and who are in *love*; if you would know how late *Belinda* comes home at night, what *cloaths* ſhe has bought, how ſhe loves *compliments*, and what a long ſtory ſhe told at ſuch a place; if you would know how croſs *Lucius* is to his *wife*, what ill-natured things he ſays to her when *nobody* hears him; if you would know how they hate one another in their *hearts*, though they appear ſo kind in public, you muſt viſit *Flavia* on the *Sunday*. But ſtill ſhe has ſo great a regard for the holineſs of the day, that ſhe has turned a poor old widow out of her houſe, as a *prophane wretch*, for having been found once *mending her cloaths* on the *Sunday* night.

Thus lives *Flavia*; and if ſhe lives ten years longer, ſhe will have ſpent about *fifteen hundred and ſixty Sundays* after this manner. She will have wore about *two hundred* different ſuits of cloaths. Out of this *thirty years* of her life, fifteen of them will have been diſpoſed of in *bed*; and of the remaining fifteen, about *fourteen* of them will have been conſumed in eating, drinking, dreſſing, viſiting, converſation, reading and hearing plays and romances; at operas, aſſemblies, balls,

balls, and diverſions. For you may reckon all the time ſhe is *up*, thus ſpent, except about an *hour* and half that is diſpoſed of at church, moſt *Sundays* in the year. With great management, and under mighty rules of œconomy, ſhe will have ſpent *ſixty hundred* pounds upon herſelf, bating only ſome *ſhillings*, *crowns*, or *half crowns*, that have gone from her in *accidental* charities.

9. I ſhall not take upon me to ſay, that it is impoſſible for *Flavia* to be ſaved; but thus much muſt be ſaid, that her whole life is in direct oppoſition to all thoſe *tempers* and *practices* which the goſpel has made neceſſary to ſalvation.

* If you was to hear her ſay, that ſhe had lived all her life like *Anna* the propheteſs, *who departed not from the temple, but ſerved God with faſtings and prayers night and day*, you would look upon her as very extravagant; and yet this would be no greater an extravagance, than for her to ſay, that ſhe had been *ſtriving to enter in at the ſtraight gate*, or making any one doctrine of the goſpel a rule of her life.

* She may as well ſay, that ſhe lived with our Saviour when he was upon earth, as that ſhe has lived in imitation of him, or made it any part of her care to live in ſuch tempers, as he required of all thoſe that would be his diſciples. She may as truly ſay, that ſhe has every day *waſhed the ſaints feet*, as that ſhe has lived in Chriſtian *humility* and *poverty* of Spirit; and as reaſonably think, that ſhe has taught a *charity-ſchool*,

as

as that she has lived in *works of charity*. She has as much reason to think, that she has been a *centinel* in an army, as that she has lived in *watching and self-denial*. And it may as fairly be said, that she lived by the labour of her hands, as that she had *given all diligence to make her calling and election sure*.

10. And here it is to be well observed, that the *poor*, *vain* turn of mind, the *folly* and *vanity* of this whole life of *Flavia*, is all owing to the manner of using her estate. It is this that has formed her *spirit*, that has given life to every *idle temper*, that has supported every *trifling passion*, and kept her from all thoughts of a prudent, useful, and devout life.

When her parents died, she had no thoughts about her two hundred pounds a year; but that she had so much money to do what she would with, to spend upon herself, and purchase the pleasures and gratifications of all her passions.

And it is this setting out, this false judgment, and indiscreet use of her fortune, that has filled her whole life with the same indiscretion, and kept her from thinking of what is *right*, and *wise*, and pious in every thing else.

If you have seen her delighted in *plays* and *romances*, in *scandal* and *backbiting*, easily *flattered*, and soon *affronted*; if you have seen her devoted to *pleasures* and *diversions*, a slave to every *passion* in its turn, nice in every thing that concerned her *body* or *dress*, careless of every thing

that

that might benefit her *ſoul*, always wanting ſome new entertainment, and ready for every *happy* invention in *ſhew* or *dreſs*, it was becauſe ſhe had *purchaſed* all theſe tempers with her yearly revenue.

11. She might have been *humble*, *ſerious*, *devout*, a lover of *good books*, an admirer of *prayer* and retirement, careful of her time, diligent in *good works*, full of *charity* and the love of God; but that the imprudent uſe of her eſtate forced all the contrary tempers upon her.

And it was no wonder that ſhe ſhould turn her *time*, her *mind*, her *health* and ſtrength to the ſame uſes that ſhe turned her fortune. It is owing to her being wrong in ſo great an *article* of life, that you can ſee nothing wiſe, or pious, in any other part of it.

12. And as *Flavia* is undone by the unreaſonable uſe of her fortune; ſo the *lowneſs* of moſt peoples virtue, the *imperfections* of their piety, and the diſorders of their *paſſions*, are generally owing to their imprudent uſe of lawful things.

More people are kept from a true ſenſe of religion, by a *regular kind* of ſenſuality than by groſs *drunkenneſs*. More men live regardleſs of the great duties of piety, through too *great a concern* for worldly goods, than through *direct injuſtice*.

13. This man would perhaps be devout, if he was not a *virtuoſo*. Another is deaf to all the motives to piety, by indulging an *idle*, *ſlothful* temper.

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Could you cure this man of his *curiosity* and *inquisitive* temper, or that of his *false* satisfaction and thirst after *learning*, you need do no more to make them both become men of great piety.

If this *woman* would make *fewer visits*, or that not be *always talking*, they would neither of them find it hard to be affected with religion.

Would we therefore make a real progress in religion, we must not only abhor *gross* and *notorious* sins; but regulate the *innocent* and *lawful* parts of our behaviour, and put the common actions of life under the rules of discretion and piety.

CHAP. VII.

How the wise and pious use of an estate carrieth us to all the virtues of the Christian life; represented in the character of Miranda.

1. MIRANDA (the sister of *Flavia*) is a sober, reasonable Christian. As soon as she was mistress of her *time* and *fortune*, it was her first thought how she might *best fulfil* every thing that God required of her in the use of them, and make the best use of this short life. She depends upon the truth of what our blessed Lord hath said, *that there is but one thing needful*; and therefore makes her whole life but one

one continual labour after it. She has but one reason for doing, or not doing, for liking, or not liking any thing; and that is, the *will* of God. She is not so weak as to pretend to add, what is called the *fine lady*, to the true Christian; *Miranda* thinks too well, to be taken with the sound of such silly words. She has renounced the world, to follow Christ in the exercise of humility, charity, devotion, abstinence, and heavenly affections; and that is *Miranda*'s fine breeding.

Whilst she was under her *mother*, she was forced to live in *ceremony*, to sit up late at *nights*, to be in the folly of every *fashion*, to go loaded with *finery* to the holy sacrament, to be in every polite *conversation*, to hear prophaneness at the *play-house*, and wanton songs and love-intrigues at the *opera*, to dance at public places, that *fops* and *rakes* might admire the fineness of her *shape*, and the *beauty* of her motions. The remembrance of this way of life, makes her exceeding careful to maintain a contrary behaviour.

2. *Miranda* does not divide her duty between God, her neighbour, and herself; but she considers all as due to God, and so does every thing for his sake. This makes her consider her *fortune* as the gift of God, that is to be used, as every thing is that belongs to God, for the wise and reasonable ends of a Christian life. Her fortune therefore is divided betwixt herself and several other poor people, and she has only her part

part of *relief* from it. She thinks it the same folly to indulge herself in needless expences, as to give to other people to spend in the same way; therefore, as she will not give a poor man money to go see a *puppet shew*; neither will she allow herself any to spend in the same manner, thinking it very proper to be as *wise* herself as she expects poor men should be. For is it a folly and a crime in a *poor* man, says *Miranda*, to waste what is given him in trifles, whilst he wants *meat*, *drink*, and *cloaths*? And is it less folly, or a less crime in me, to spend that money in silly diversions, which might be so much better spent in *imitation* of the divine goodness, in works of kindness to my fellow-creatures? If a poor man's own necessities are a reason why he should not waste any of his money idly, surely the necessities of the *poor*, and the *excellency* of charity, is a much *greater reason* why no one should waste any of his money. For if he does so, he does not only, like the poor man, waste that which he wants himself; but that which is wanted for the most noble uses, and which Christ himself is ready to receive at his hands. And if we are angry at a *poor* man, when he throws away that which should buy his own bread, how must we appear in the sight of God, if we make a *wanton* idle use of that which would buy bread and cloaths for our hungry and naked brethren, who are as near and dear to God as we are, and fellow-heirs of the same glory? This is

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the ſpirit of *Miranda*: ſhe is only one of a certain number of poor *people* that are *relieved* out of her fortune; and ſhe only differs from them in the *bleſſedneſs* of giving.

3. If you was to ſee her, you would wonder what poor body it was, that was ſo ſurprizingly *neat* and *clean*. She has but one rule in her dreſs, to be always *clean*, and in the *cheapeſt* things. Every thing about her reſembles the purity of her ſoul; and ſhe is always clean without, becauſe ſhe is always pure within.

Every morning ſees her *early* at her prayers. She rejoices in the beginning of every day, becauſe it begins all her rules of holy living, and brings the freſh pleaſure of repeating them. She is as *guardian angel* to thoſe that dwell about her, with her watchings and prayers, bleſſing the place where ſhe dwells, and making interceſſion with God for thoſe that are aſleep.

Her devotions have had ſome intervals; before the light is ſuffered to enter into her ſiſter's room. *Miranda* does not know what it is to have a dull half-day; the returns of her hours of prayer, and her religious exerciſes, comes too often to let any conſiderable part of time lie heavy upon her hands.

4. When you ſee her at *work*, you ſee the ſame wiſdom that governs all her other actions. She is either doing ſomething that is neceſſary for herſelf, or neceſſary for others who want to be aſſiſted. There is ſcarce a poor family in the neigh-

neighbourhood, but wears fomething or other that has had the labour of her hands. Her pious mind neither wants the amufement, nor can bear with the folly of idle impertinent work. When there is no *ufeful* or *charitable* work to be done, *Miranda* will work no more.

At her table fhe lives ftrictly by this rule of holy fcripture, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatfoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* This makes her begin and end every meal, as fhe begins and ends every day, with acts of devotion. She eats and drinks only for the fake of living, and with fo *regular* an abftinence, that every *meal* is an exercife of *felf-denial.* If *Miranda* was to run a *race* for her life, fhe would fubmit to a *diet* that was proper for it; but as the race which is fet before her, is a race of *holinefs* and *heavenly* affection, which fhe is to finifh in a difordered body of earthly paffions; fo her every day diet has this one end, to make her body fitter for this fpiritual race. She does not weigh her meat in a pair of *fcales*; but fhe weighs it in a much better ballance: fo much as gives a proper ftrength to her body, and renders it able and willing to obey the foul, to join in pfalms and prayers, and lift up eyes and hands towards heaven with greater readinefs, fo much is *Miranda's meal.* So that *Miranda* will never have her eyes fwell with fatnefs, till fhe has *changed* her religion.

5. The holy fcriptures, efpecially of the New Teftament, are her daily ftudy; thefe fhe reads with

with a watchful attention, conſtantly caſting an eye upon herſelf, and trying herſelf by every doctrine that is there. When ſhe has the New Teſtament in her hand, ſhe ſuppoſes herſelf at the feet of our Saviour and his apoſtles; and makes every thing that ſhe learns of them ſo many laws of her life. She receives their words with as much attention and reverence, as if ſhe ſaw their perſons, and knew that they were juſt come from heaven, on purpoſe to teach her the way that leads to it.

She thinks that the trying herſelf every day by the ſcripture, is the only way to be ready for her trial at the laſt day.

Of all human writings, the lives of pious perſons, and eminent ſaints, are her greateſt delight. In theſe ſhe ſearches as for hidden treaſure, hoping to find ſome ſecret of holy living, ſome uncommon degree of piety, which ſhe may make her own. By this means *Miranda* has her head and heart ſtored with all the principles of wiſdom and holineſs. She is ſo full of the one buſineſs of life, that ſhe finds it difficult to converſe upon any other ſubject; and if you are in her company, you muſt be made wiſer and better, whether you will or no.

6. To relate her charity, would be to relate the hiſtory of every day for twenty years; for ſo long has all her fortune been ſpent that way. She has ſet up near twenty poor tradeſmen that had failed in their buſineſs, and ſaved as many

from failing. She has educated several poor children, that were picked up in the ſtreets, and put them in an honeſt employment. As ſoon as any labourer is confined at home with any ſickneſs, ſhe ſends him, till he recovers, twice the value of his wages, that he may have one part to give to his family, as uſual, and the other to provide things convenient for his ſickneſs.

If a family ſeems too large to be ſupported by the labour of thoſe that can work in it, ſhe pays their rent, and gives them ſomething yearly towards their cloathing. By this means there are many poor families that live in a comfortable manner, and are from year to year bleſſing her in their prayers. If there is any poor man or woman that is more than ordinary wicked, *Miranda* has her eye upon them: ſhe watches their time of adverſity; and if ſhe can diſcover they are in ſtraits or affliction, ſhe gives them ſpeedy relief. She has this care for this ſort of people, becauſe ſhe once ſaved a profligate perſon from being carried to priſon, who immediately became a true penitent.

7. There is nothing in the character of *Miranda* more to be admired than this temper. For this tenderneſs towards the moſt abandoned ſinners, is the higheſt inſtance of a godlike ſoul.

Miranda once paſſed by a houſe, where the *man* and his *wife* were curſing and ſwearing at one another in a moſt dreadful manner, and three children

children crying about them. This ſight ſo much affected her compaſſionate mind, that ſhe went the next day, and bought the three children, that they might not be ruined by living with ſuch wicked parents. They now live with *Miranda*, are bleſſed with her care and prayers, and all the good works which ſhe can do for them. They hear her talk, they ſee her live, they join with her in pſalms and prayers. The eldeſt of them has already converted his parents from their wicked life, and ſhews a turn of mind ſo remarkably pious, that *Miranda* intends him for *holy orders*; that being thus ſaved himſelf, he may do to other miſerable objects, as ſhe has done to him.

Miranda is a conſtant relief to poor people in their *misfortunes* and *accidents*. There are ſometimes little misfortunes that happen to them, which of themſelves they could never be able to overcome. The death of a *cow*, or a *horſe*, or ſome little *robbery*, would keep them in diſtreſs all their lives. She does not ſuffer them to grieve under ſuch accidents. She immediately gives them the full value of their loſs, and makes uſe of it as a means of raiſing their minds to God.

She has a great tenderneſs for *old people* that are paſt their labour. The pariſh allowance to ſuch is ſeldom a comfortable maintenance. For this reaſon they are the conſtant objects of her care. She adds ſo much to their allowance, as

fomewhat exceeds the wages they got when they were young. This ſhe does to comfort the infirmities of their age, that, being free from trouble, they may ſerve God in peace. She has generally a large number of this kind, who, by her charities and exhortations, ſpend their laſt days in great piety.

9. *Miranda* never wants compaſſion, even to common beggars; eſpecially thoſe that are *old* or *ſick*, or that want *eyes* or *limbs*. She hears their complaints with tenderneſs, gives them ſome proof of her kindneſs, and never rejects them with hard or reproachful language, for fear of adding affliction to her fellow creatures.

If a poor traveller tells her, that he has neither *ſtrength*, nor *food*, nor *money* left, ſhe never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him, that ſhe cannot relieve him, becauſe he may be a *cheat*, and ſhe does not know him; but ſhe relieves him for that reaſon, becauſe he is a *ſtranger*, and *unknown* to her. For it is the moſt noble part of charity, to be kind to thoſe whom we never ſaw before, and perhaps never may ſee again in this life. *I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in*, ſaith our bleſſed Saviour: but who can perform this duty, that will not relieve perſons that are unknown to him?

Miranda conſiders, that *Lazarus* was a common beggar; that he was the care of angels, and carried into *Abraham*'s boſom. She conſiders, that our bleſſed Saviour and his apoſtles were kind

kind to *beggars*; that they ſpoke comfortably to them, healed their diſeaſes, and reſtored eyes and limbs to the blind and lame; that *Peter* ſaid to the beggar that wanted an alms from him, *Silver and gold have I none, but ſuch as I have, give I thee; in the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, riſe up and walk.* *Miranda* therefore never treats beggars with diſregard and averſion; but imitates the kindneſs of our Saviour and his apoſtles towards them; and tho' ſhe cannot, like them, work miracles for their relief, yet ſhe relieves them with that power that ſhe hath; and may ſay with the apoſtle, *ſuch as I have give I thee, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt.*

It may be, ſays *Miranda*, that I may often give to thoſe that do not deſerve it, or that will make an *ill uſe* of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of divine goodneſs? Does not God make *his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good?* Is not this the very *goodneſs* that is recommended to us in ſcripture, that by imitating of it, we may be children of our Father which is in heaven, *who ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt?* And ſhall I with-hold a little *money* or *food* from my fellow-creature, for fear he ſhould not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to his own goodneſs; and ſhall I be ſo abſurd, as to with-hold my charity from a poor brother, becauſe he may perhaps not deſerve it? Shall I uſe a *mea-*

ſure towards him, which I pray God never to uſe towards me?

Beſides, where has the ſcripture made *merit* the rule or meaſure of charity? On the contrary, the ſcripture ſaith, *If thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink,*

Now this plainly teaches us, that the *merit* of perſons is to be no rule of our charity, but that we are to do acts of kindneſs to thoſe that *leaſt* of all deſerve it. For if I am to *love* and do good to my worſt enemies; notwithſtanding all their *ſpite* and *malice*, ſurely *merit* is no meaſure of charity. If I am not to with-hold my charity from ſuch bad people, ſurely I am not to deny alms to poor beggars, whom I do not know to be bad people.

11. You will perhaps ſay, that by this means I encourage people to be *beggars*. But the ſame thoughtleſs objection may be made againſt *all kinds* of charities, for they may encourage people to depend upon them. The ſame may be ſaid againſt *forgiving* our enemies, for it may *encourage* people to do us hurt. The ſame may be ſaid, even againſt the goodneſs of God, that by pouring his bleſſings on the evil and on the good, on the juſt and on the unjuſt, evil and unjuſt men are *encouraged* in their wicked ways. The ſame may be ſaid againſt cloathing the naked, or giving medicines to the ſick, for that may encourage people to *neglect* themſelves, and be *careleſs* of their health. But when

when the *love of God dwelleth in you*, and has filled you with bowels of mercy, you will make no more such objections as these.

When you are at any time turning away the *poor*, the *old*, the *sick* and *helpless* traveller, the *lame*, or the *blind*, ask yourself this question, Do I sincerely wish these poor creatures may be as happy as *Lazarus*, that was carried by *angels* into *Abraham*'s bosom? Do I sincerely desire that God would make them fellow-heirs with me in eternal glory? Now if you search into your soul, you will find that there is none of these motions there, that you are wishing nothing of this. For it is impossible for any one heartily to wish a poor creature so *great* a happiness, and yet not have a heart to give him a *small* alms. For this reason, says *Miranda*, as far as I can, I give to *all*, because I pray to God to forgive *all*; and I cannot refuse an alms to those whom I pray God to bless, whom I wish to be partakers of *eternal glory*; but am glad to shew some degree of love to such, as, I hope, will be the objects of the infinite love of God. And if, as our Saviour has assured us, *it be more blessed to give than to receive*, we ought to look upon those that ask our alms, as so many *friends* and *benefactors* that come to do us a greater good than they can receive; that come to be *witnesses* of our charity, to be *monuments* of our love, to *appear* for us at the day of judgment, and to help

us to a bleſſedneſs greater than our alms can beſtow on them.

12. This is the ſpirit, and this is the life of *Miranda*; and if ſhe lives ten years longer, ſhe will have ſpent *ſixty hundred* pounds in charity; for that which ſhe allows herſelf, may fairly be reckoned among her *alms*.

When ſhe dies, ſhe muſt ſhine amongſt *apoſtles*, and *ſaints*, and *martyrs*; ſhe muſt ſtand among the *firſt ſervants* of God, and be glorious among thoſe that have fought the good fight, and finiſhed their courſe with joy.

13. Now this life of *Miranda*, however contrary to the faſhion of the world, is yet ſuitable to the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity.

To live as ſhe does, is as truly ſuitable to the goſpel of Chriſt, as to be *baptized*, or receive the *ſacrament*.

Her ſpirit is that which animated the *ſaints* of former ages; and it is becauſe they lived as ſhe does, that we now celebrate their memories, and praiſe God for their examples.

There is nothing *whimſical*, *trifling*, *or unreaſonable* in her character; but every thing there deſcribed, is a proper inſtance of ſolid piety.

14. It is as eaſy to ſhew, that it is *whimſical* to go to church, as that it is whimſical to obſerve any of theſe rules. For all *Miranda*'s rules of living to God, of ſpending her *time* and *fortune*, of eating, working, dreſſing, and converſing,

ſing, are as ſubſtantial parts of an holy life, as devotion and prayer.

For there is nothing to be ſaid for the wiſdom of *devotion*, but what is as good an argument for the wiſe and reaſonable uſe of *apparel*.

If you fancy that it is your *only folly*, and that therefore there can be no great matter in it, you are like thoſe that think they are only guilty of the folly of covetouſneſs or ambition. Now though ſome people may live ſo plauſible a life, as to appear chargeable with no other fault than covetouſneſs or ambition; yet the caſe is not as it appears, for covetouſneſs or ambition cannot ſubſiſt in a heart that is in other reſpects rightly devoted to God.

In like manner, though ſome may ſpend moſt that they have in needleſs ornaments, and yet ſeem in other reſpects truly pious, yet it is certainly falſe; for it is impoſſible for a mind that is in a *true ſtate* of religion, to be vain in the uſe of cloaths. Now to convince you of this, let us ſuppoſe that ſome *eminent ſaint*, for inſtance, the *Virgin Mary* was ſent into the world for a few years, and that you was going to her to be edified by her piety, would you expect to find her dreſſed out and adorned in fine and expenſive cloaths? No: you would know in your own mind, that it was as impoſſible as to find her learning to *dance*. Do but add *ſaint*, or *holy*, to any perſon, either *man* or *woman*, and your own mind tells you immediately, that ſuch a character

cannot admit of the vanity of fine apparel. A *ſaint* finely dreſſed, is as great nonſenſe, as an *apoſtle* in an *embroidered ſuit*. Every one's own natural ſenſe convinces him of the inconſiſtency of theſe things.

16. Now what is the reaſon, that when you think of a *ſaint*, you cannot admit the vanity of apparel? Is it not becauſe it is inconſiſtent with ſuch a right ſtate of heart? And is not this a demonſtration, that where ſuch vanity is admitted, there a right ſtate of heart is wanted? For as certainly as the *Virgin Mary* could not indulge herſelf, or conform to the vanity of the world in *dreſs* and *figure*; ſo certain is it, that none can indulge themſelves in this vanity, but thoſe who want her piety of heart; and conſequently it muſt be owned, that all needleſs and expenſive finery is the effect of a diſordered heart.

Covetouſneſs is not a crime, becauſe there is any harm in *gold* or *ſilver*; but becauſe it is a fooliſh and unreaſonable ſtate of mind, that is fallen from its true good, and ſunk into ſuch a poor and wretched ſatisfaction.

In like manner, the *expenſive finery* of dreſs is not a crime, becauſe there is any thing good or evil in cloaths, but becauſe the expenſive ornaments of cloathing ſhews a *fooliſh* and *unreaſonable* ſtate of heart, that is fallen from right notions of human nature, and turns the neceſſi-

ties

ties of life into so many instances of pride and folly.

17. This therefore is the way that you are to judge of the crime of vain apparel: it is an offence against the *proper use* of cloaths, as covetousness is an offence against the proper use of money: it is an indulgence of *proud* and *unreasonable* tempers, an offence against the *humility* and *sobriety* of the Christian spirit: it is an offence against all those doctrines that require you to do all to the *glory* of God, and an offence against all those texts of scripture, that command you to *love* your neighbour as yourself, to *feed* the hungry, to *cloath* the naked, and do *all works* of charity that you are able. So that you must not deceive yourself with saying, where can be the harm of *cloaths?* For the covetous man might as well say, where can be the harm of *gold* or *silver?* But you must consider, that it is a great deal of harm to want that *wise* and *reasonable* state of heart, which is according to the spirit of religion, and which no one can have in the manner that he ought to have it, who indulges himself either in the *vanity* of dress, or the *desire* of riches.

18. Some persons perhaps, who admire the life of *Miranda*, may say, how can it be proposed as a common example? How can we that are married, or we who are under the direction of our parents, imitate such a life?

It is anſwered, juſt as you may imitate the life of our bleſſed Saviour and his apoſtles. The circumſtances of our Saviour's life, and the ſtate and condition of his apoſtles, were more different from yours than that of *Miranda* is; and yet their life is the common example that is propoſed to all Chriſtians.

It is their *ſpirit* therefore, their piety, their love of God, that you are to imitate, and not the particular form of their life.

Act under God as they did, direct your common actions to that end which they did, practiſe ſuch love of God, ſuch charity to your neighbour, ſuch humility and ſelf-denial, as they did; and then, though you are only teaching your own children, and St. *Paul* is converting nations, yet you are following his ſteps, and acting after his example.

19. Don't think therefore, that you can't or need not be like *Miranda*, becauſe you are not in her ſtate of life: for as the ſame ſpirit and temper would have made *Miranda* a *ſaint*, tho' ſhe had been forced to labour for a maintenance; ſo if you will aſpire after her ſpirit, every *condition* of life will furniſh you with ſufficient means of employing it.

Miranda is what ſhe is, becauſe ſhe does every thing in the name, and with regard to her duty to God; and when you do the ſame, you will be exactly like her, though you are never ſo different in your outward ſtate.

You

You are married, you ſay; therefore you have not your *time* and *fortune* in your power as ſhe has.

It is true; therefore you cannot ſpend *ſo much* time, nor *ſo much* money in the manner that ſhe does.

But *Miranda*'s perfection does not conſiſt in this, that ſhe ſpends *ſo much* time, or *ſo much* money in ſuch a manner, but that ſhe is careful to make the beſt uſe of all the time and money which ſhe has. Do you this, and then you are like *Miranda*.

If ſhe has *two hundred pounds* a year, and you have only *two mites*, have you not the more reaſon to be exceeding exact in the wiſeſt uſe of it? If ſhe has a great deal of time, and you have but a little, ought you not to be the more *watchful* and *circumſpect*, leſt that *little* ſhould be loſt?

CHAP. VIII.

Shewing that all orders of men and women, of all ages, are obliged to devote themſelves to God.

1. I HAVE in the foregoing chapters ſhewn that all the parts of our common life, our *employments*, our *talents* and *fortune*, are to be made holy and acceptable unto God, by a wiſe and religious uſe of every thing, and by directing our actions and deſigns to the glory of God.

I ſhall now ſhew, that this holineſs of common life,

life, this religious use of every thing we have, is a devotion that is the duty of all orders of Christian people.

* *Fulvius* has had a learned education, and taken his degrees in the *university*; he came from thence, that he might be free from any rules of life. He takes no employment upon him, nor enters into any business, because he thinks that every employment or business calls people to the just discharge of its several duties. He did not enter into holy orders, because he looks upon it to be a state that requires great holiness of life, and it does not suit his temper to be so good. He will tell you that he never intends to marry, because he cannot oblige himself to that regularity of life, which he takes to be the duty of those that are at the head of a family. He refused to be *godfather* to his nephew, because he will have no *trust* of any kind to answer for.

Fulvius thinks that he is conscientious in this conduct, and is therefore content with the most *idle*, *impertinent*, and *careless* life.

He has no religion, no devotion, no pretences to piety. He lives by no rules, and thinks all is very well, because he is neither a *priest*, nor a *father*, nor a *guardian*, nor has any *employment* or family to look after.

2. * But *Fulvius*, you are a rational creature, and as such, are as much obliged to live according to *reason*, as a *priest* is obliged to attend at the *altar*, or a *guardian* to be faithful to his trust:

if

if you live contrary to reaſon, you don't commit a ſmall crime, you don't break a ſmall truſt; but you break the *law* of your nature, you rebel againſt God who gave you that nature, and put yourſelf among thoſe whom the God of *reaſon* will puniſh as *apoſtates* and *deſerters*.

Though you have no employment, yet as you are baptized into the profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, you are as much obliged to live according to the holineſs of the Chriſtian ſpirit, as any man is obliged to be honeſt and faithful in his calling. If you abuſe this great calling, you are not falſe in a ſmall matter, but you abuſe the precious blood of Chriſt; you crucify the Son of God afreſh; you neglect the higheſt inſtances of divine goodneſs; and it will be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon at the day of judgment than for you*.

3. It is therefore great folly for any one to think himſelf at liberty to live as he pleaſes, becauſe he is not in ſuch a ſtate of life as ſome others are: for if there is any thing dreadful in the abuſe of any *truſt*; if there is any thing to be feared for the neglect of any calling, there is nothing more to be feared than the wrong uſe of our *reaſon*, nor any thing more to be dreaded, than the neglect of our *Chriſtian calling*; which is not to ſerve the little uſes of a ſhort life, but to redeem ſouls unto God, to fill heaven with ſaints, and finiſh a kingdom of eternal glory.

No

No man therefore muſt think himſelf excuſed from the *exactneſs* of piety, becauſe he has choſen to be *idle* and *independent* in the world; for the *neceſſities* of a holy life are not founded in the ſeveral conditions of this life, but in the immutable nature of God and the nature of man. A man is not to be reaſonable and holy, becauſe he is a *prieſt*, or a *father* of a family; but he is to be a pious prieſt, and a good father, becauſe piety and goodneſs are the *laws* of human nature. Could any man pleaſe God, without living according to *reaſon* and *order*, there would be nothing diſpleaſing to God in an *idle* prieſt or a *reprobate* father. He therefore that abuſes his *reaſon*, is like him that abuſes the *prieſthood*; and he that neglects the holineſs of the *Chriſtian life*, is as the man that diſregards the moſt *important truſt*.

4. If a man was to chuſe to put out his eyes, rather than enjoy the light, and ſee the works of God; if he ſhould voluntarily kill himſelf, by refuſing to eat and drink, every one would own that ſuch a one was a rebel againſt God, that juſtly deſerved his higheſt indignation. You would not ſay, that this was only ſinful in a *prieſt*, or a *maſter* of a family, but in every man as ſuch.

Now wherein does the ſinfulneſs of this behaviour conſiſt? Does it not conſiſt in this, that he abuſes his *nature*, and refuſes to act that part for which God had created him? But if this be true, then all perſons that abuſe their *reaſon*, that

that act a different part from that for which God created them, are like this man, rebels againſt God, and on the ſame account ſubject to his wrath.

* Let us ſuppoſe that this man, inſtead of putting out his eyes, had only employed them in looking at *ridiculous things*, or ſhut them up in *ſleep*; that inſtead of *ſtarving* himſelf to death, by not eating at all, he ſhould turn every meal into a *feaſt*, and eat and drink like an *epicure*, could he be ſaid to have lived more to the glory of God? Could he any more be ſaid to act the part for which God had created him, than if he had put out his eyes, and ſtarved himſelf to death?

Now do but ſuppoſe a man extinguiſhing his *reaſon*, inſtead of putting out his *eyes*, and living in a courſe of folly and impertinence, inſtead of ſtarving himſelf to death, and then you have found out as *great a rebel* againſt God.

6. * If we conſider mankind as a redeemed order of *fallen ſpirits*, that are baptized into a fellowſhip with the Son of God; to be temples of the Holy Ghoſt; to live according to his holy inſpirations; to offer to God the reaſonable ſacrifice of an humble, pious, and thankful life; to purify themſelves from the diſorders of their fall; to make a right uſe of the means of grace, in order to be ſons of eternal glory: if we look at mankind in this true light, then we ſhall find, that

that all tempers that are contrary to this holy society; all actions that make us unlike to Christ, have every thing in them that can make us odious to God. So that tho' *pride* and *sensuality*, do not hurt civil society, as *cheating* and *dishonesty* do; yet they hurt that society, and oppose those ends, which are greater and more glorious in the eyes of God, than all the societies that relate to this world.

7.* Nothing therefore can be more foolish, than to imagine, that because we are private persons who have taken upon us no charge or employment, therefore we may live more at large, indulge our appetites, and be less careful of holiness, for it is as good an excuse for *cheating* and *dishonesty*; because he that abuses his *reason*, that indulges himself in *lust* and *sensuality*, and neglects to act the wise reasonable part of a Christian, has every thing in his life to render him hateful to God, that is to be found in *cheating* and *dishonesty*.

If therefore you rather chuse to be an *idle epicure*, than to be *unfaithful*; if you rather chuse to live in *lust* and *sensuality*, than to injure your neighbour in his goods, you have made no better a provision for the favour of God, than he that rather chuses to rob a *house*, than to rob a *church*.

For the abusing of our own nature, is as great a disobedience against God, as the injuring our neighbour; and he that wants piety towards God, has

has done as much to damn himself, as he that wants honesty towards men.

8. Another argument to prove that all orders of men are obliged to be thus holy in the common course of their lives, in the use of every thing that they enjoy, may be taken from our obligation to *prayer*.

It is granted, that *prayer* is a duty that belongs to all states and conditions of men. Now, if we enquire, why no state of life is to be excused from prayer, we shall find it as good a reason why every state of life is to be made a state of holiness in all its parts.

For the reason why we are to pray to God, and praise him with hymns and psalms of thanksgiving, is because we are to live wholly to God, and glorify him in all possible ways. It is not because the praises of *words*, or *forms* of thanksgiving, are more particularly parts of piety, or more the worship of God than other things; but it is because they are possible ways of expressing our dependance, our obedience and devotion to God. Now, if this be the reason of verbal praises and thanksgivings, because we are to live to God in all possible ways; then we are equally obliged to glorify God in all other actions that can be turned into acts of piety and obedience. And as actions are of much more significancy than words, it must be a much more acceptable worship of God to glorify him in all the actions of our common

common life, than with any little form of words at any particular times.

Thus, if God is to be worſhipped with forms of thankſgiving, he that is content and thankful in every accident of his life, becauſe it comes from God, praiſes God in a much higher manner, than he that has ſome ſet times for ſinging of pſalms. He that dares not ſay an ill-natured word, or do an unreaſonable thing, becauſe he conſiders God as every where preſent, performs a better devotion than he that dares not miſs the church. To live in the world as a ſtranger and a pilgrim, uſing all its enjoyments as if we uſed them not, making all our actions ſo many ſteps towards a better life, is offering a better ſacrifice to God, than any forms of holy and heavenly prayers.

9. To be humble in all our actions, to avoid every appearance of pride and vanity, to be meek and lowly in our words, actions, dreſs, behaviour, and deſigns, in imitation of our bleſſed Saviour, is worſhipping God in a higher manner, than thoſe do who have only *times* to fall low on their knees. He that contents himſelf with *neceſſaries*, that he may give the *remainder* to thoſe that want it; that dares not ſpend any money fooliſhly, becauſe he conſiders it as a talent from God, which muſt be uſed according to his will, praiſes God with ſomething more glorious than ſongs of praiſe.

Prayers

Prayers therefore are ſo far from being a ſufficient devotion, that they are the ſmalleſt parts of it. We are to praiſe God with words and prayers, becauſe it is a poſſible way of glorifying God. But then, as words are but ſmall things in themſelves, as times of prayer are but little, if compared with the reſt of our lives; ſo that devotion which conſiſts in times and forms of prayer, is but a very ſmall thing, if compared to that devotion which is to appear in every other part and circumſtance of our lives.

10. Again, as it is an eaſy thing to worſhip God with forms of words, and to obſerve times of offering them unto him, ſo it is the ſmalleſt kind of piety.

And, on the other hand, as it is more difficult to worſhip God with our ſubſtance, to honour him with the right uſe of our time, to offer to him the continual ſacrifice of ſelf-denial and mortification; as it requires more piety to eat and drink only for ſuch ends as may glorify God, to undertake no labour, nor allow of any diverſion, but where we can act in the name of God; as it is moſt difficult to ſacrifice all our corrupt tempers, and make piety to God the rule and meaſure of all the actions of our common life; ſo the devotion of this kind is a much more acceptable ſervice to God, than thoſe words of devotion which we offer to him either in the *church* or in our *cloſet*.

Every

Every ſober reader will eaſily perceive, that I don't intend to leſſen the value of prayers, either public or private; but only to ſhew him, that they are but a very ſlender part of devotion, when compared to a devout life.

11. * To ſee this in a yet clearer light, let us ſuppoſe a perſon to have appointed times for praiſing God with pſalms and hymns, and to be ſtrict in the obſervation of them; let it be ſuppoſed alſo, that in his common life he is reſtleſs and uneaſy, full of murmurings and complaints at every thing, never pleaſed but by chance, but murmuring and repining at the very ſeaſons, and having ſomething to diſlike in every thing that happens to him. Now, can you conceive any thing more abſurd and unreaſonable, than ſuch a character as this? Is ſuch a one to be reckoned *thankful* to God, becauſe he has *forms of praiſe* which he offers to him? Nay, is it not certain, that ſuch forms of praiſe muſt be ſo far from being an acceptable devotion to God, that they muſt be an abomination? Now the abſurdity which you ſee in this inſtance, is the ſame in any other part of our life. If our *common life* hath any contrariety to our prayers, it is the ſame abomination, as ſongs of thankſgiving in the mouths of murmurers.

Bended knees, whilſt you are cloathed with pride: heavenly petitions, whilſt you are hoarding up treaſures upon earth; holy devotions, whilſt you live in the follies of the world;

prayers

prayers of meekneſs and charity, whilſt your heart is the ſeat of ſpite and reſentment; hours of prayer, whilſt you give up days and years to idle diverſions, impertinent viſits, and fooliſh pleaſures, are as unacceptable a ſervice to God, as forms of thankſgiving from a perſon that lives in repinings and diſcontent.

So that unleſs the common courſe of our lives be according to the common ſpirit of our prayers, our prayers are ſo far from being a ſufficient degree of devotion, that they become an empty lip-labour; or, what is worſe, a notorious hypocriſy.

12. Seeing therefore we are to make the *ſpirit* and *temper* of our prayers the *common ſpirit and temper* of our lives, this may convince us, that *all orders* of people are to labour after the *ſame utmoſt* perfection of the Chriſtian life. For as all Chriſtians are to uſe the ſame holy and heavenly devotions, as they are all with the ſame earneſtneſs to pray for the Spirit of God; ſo is it a ſufficient proof, that all orders of people are, to the utmoſt of their power, to make their life agreeable to that one Spirit for which they all pray.

*A *ſoldier*, or a *tradeſman*, is not called to miniſter at the *altar*, or preach the goſpel; but every ſoldier or tradeſman is as much obliged to be devout, humble, holy, and heavenly-minded in all the parts of his *common life*, as a *clergyman* is

is obliged to be zealous, faithful, and laborious in all parts of his profeſſion.

13. * All men therefore, as men, have one and the ſame important buſineſs, to act up to the excellency of their rational nature, and to make *reaſon* and *order* the law of all their deſigns and actions. All Chriſtians, as Chriſtians, have one and the ſame calling, to live according to the excellency of the Chriſtian ſpirit, and to make the ſublime precepts of the goſpel the rule and meaſure of all their tempers in common life. The one thing needful to one, is the one thing needful to all.

* The *merchant* is no longer to hoard up treaſures upon earth; the *ſoldier* is no longer to fight for glory; the great *ſcholar* is no longer to pride himſelf in the depths of ſcience; but they muſt all, with one ſpirit, *count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus.*

* The *fine lady*, muſt teach her eyes to weep, and be cloathed with humility. The *polite gentleman* muſt exchange the gay thoughts of wit and fancy, for a *broken and a contrite heart.* The man of *quality* muſt ſo far renounce the dignity of his birth, as to think himſelf miſerable till he is *born again.* *Servants* muſt conſider their ſervice as done unto God. *Maſters* muſt conſider their ſervants as their brethren in Chriſt, that are to be treated as their fellow-members of the myſtical body of Chriſt.

14. * *Young*

14. * *Young ladies* muſt either devote themſelves to piety, prayer, ſelf-denial, and all good works in a *Virgin ſtate* of life, or elſe marry to be holy, ſober, and prudent in the care of a family; bringing up their children in piety, humility, and devotion, and abounding in all other good works, to the utmoſt of their capacity. They have no choice of any thing elſe; but muſt devote themſelves to God in one of theſe ſtates. They may chuſe a married, or a ſingle life; but it is not left to their choice, whether they will make either ſtate, a ſtate of holineſs, humility, and all other duties of he Chriſtian life. It is no more left in their power, becauſe they have fortunes, or are born of rich parents, to divide themſelves betwixt God and the world, or take ſuch pleaſures as their fortune will afford them, than to be ſometimes chaſte and modeſt, and ſometimes not.

* They are not to conſider how much religion may ſecure them a *fair character*, or how they may add devotion to an *impertinent*, *vain*, and *giddy* life; but muſt look into the *ſpirit* and *temper* of their prayers, into the *nature* and *end* of Chriſtianiiy; and then they will find, that whether married or unmarried, they have but one buſineſs upon their hands; to be wiſe, and pious, and holy; not in little modes and forms of worſhip, but in the whole turn of their minds, in the whole form of their behaviour, and in the daily courſe of their common life.

15. * *Young gentlemen* muſt conſider what our bleſſed Saviour ſaid to the young gentleman in the goſpel; he bid *him ſell all he had, and give to the poor.* Now, though this text does not oblige *all* people to ſell *all*; yet it certainly obliges all kinds of people to *employ all* their eſtates in ſuch wiſe and reaſonable ways, as may ſhew, all they have is devoted to God; and that no part of it is kept from the poor, to be ſpent in needleſs, vain, and fooliſh expences.

* If therefore *young gentlemen* propoſe to themſelves a life of pleaſure and indulgence; if they ſpend their eſtates in high living, in luxury and intemperance, in ſtate and equipage, in pleaſures and diverſions, in ſports and gaming, and ſuch like wanton gratifications of their fooliſh paſſions, they have as much reaſon to look upon themſelves to be *angels*, as to be diſciples of Chriſt.

* Let them be aſſured, that it is the one only buſineſs of a *Chriſtian gentleman*, to diſtinguiſh himſelf by good works, to be eminent in the moſt ſublime virtues of the goſpel, to bear with the ignorance and weakneſs of the vulgar, to be a friend and patron to all that dwell about him, to live in the utmoſt heights of wiſdom and holineſs, and ſhew through the whole courſe of his life a true religious greatneſs of mind. They muſt aſpire after ſuch a gentility, as they might have learnt from ſeeing the bleſſed Jeſus, and ſhew no other ſpirit of a gentleman, but ſuch as they might have got by living with the holy

apoſtles.

apoſtles. They muſt learn to love God with all their heart, with all their ſoul, and with all their ſtrength, and their neighbour as themſelves; and then they have all the greatneſs and diſtinction that they can have here, and are fit for eternal happineſs in heaven.

16. Thus, in all orders and conditions, either of men or women, this is the one holineſs, which is to be the *common* life of all Chriſtians.

The *merchant* is not to leave devotion to the clergyman, nor the *clergyman* to leave humility to the *labourer*. Women of *fortune* are not to leave it to the poor of their ſex, *to be diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, to adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, ſhame-facedneſs*, and *ſobriety*; nor *poor women* to leave it to the rich to attend at the worſhip of God. *Great men* muſt be eminent for true *poverty of ſpirit*, and people of a *low and afflicted* ſtate muſt greatly rejoice in God.

The man of *ſtrength* and *power* is to forgive and pray for his enemies, and the *innocent ſufferer*, that is chained in priſon, muſt, with *Paul* and *Silas*, at midnight ſing praiſes unto God. For God is to be glorified, holineſs is to be practiſed, and the ſpirit of religion is to be the common ſpirit of every Chriſtian in every ſtate and condition of life.

* For the Son of God did not come from above, to add an external form of worſhip to

the ſeveral ways of life that are in the world, and ſo to leave people to live as they did before, in ſuch tempers and enjoyments as the faſhion and ſpirit of the world approves: but as he came down from heaven, altogether divine and heavenly in his own nature; ſo it was to call mankind to a divine and heavenly life; to the higheſt change of their whole nature and temper; to be born again of the Holy Spirit; to walk in the wiſdom, and light, and love of God, and to be like him to the utmoſt of their power; to a mortification of their paſſions; and to live in ſuch wiſdom, and holineſs, as might fit them to enjoy God to all eternity.

17. Whatever therefore is *fooliſh*, *vain*, or *earthly*, or *ſenſual* in the life of a Chriſtian, is ſomething that ought not to be there. But if any thing of this kind runs through the *courſe* of our whole life, if we allow ourſelves in things that are either vain, fooliſh, or ſenſual, we renounce our profeſſion.

For as ſure as Jeſus Chriſt was wiſdom and holineſs; as ſure as he came to make us like himſelf, ſo ſure is it, that none keep to their Chriſtian profeſſion, but they who, to the utmoſt of their power, live a wiſe, and holy, and heavenly life. This, and this alone, is Chriſtianity; univerſal holineſs in every part of life, a heavenly wiſdom in all our actions, not conforming to the ſpirit and temper of the world, but

turning

turning all worldly enjoyments into means of piety and devotion.

18. And if it be the happineſs and glory of a *biſhop* to live in this Spirit, full of theſe holy tempers, doing every thing as unto God, it is as much the glory and happineſs of all men and women, whether young or old, to live in the ſame Spirit. And whoever can find any reaſons why an *ancient biſhop* ſhould be intent upon divine things, turning all his life into the higheſt exerciſes of piety and devotion, will find them ſo many reaſons why he ſhould, to the utmoſt of his power, do the ſame himſelf.

If you ſay that a *biſhop* muſt be an eminent example of Chriſtian holineſs, becauſe of his high and ſacred calling, you ſay right. But if you ſay, that it is more to his advantage to be exemplary, than it is yours, you greatly miſtake. For there is nothing to make the higheſt degrees of holineſs deſirable to a biſhop, but what makes them equally deſirable to every *young perſon* of every family.

For an exalted piety, and the religious uſe of every thing, is as much the glory and happineſs of one ſtate of life as it is of another.

* Do but fancy what a ſpirit of piety you would have in the *beſt biſhop* in the world, how you would have him *love* God, how you would have him *imitate* the life of our Saviour and his apoſtles, how you would have him live *above*

the world, *ſhining* in all the inſtances of a *heavenly life*, and then you have found out that Spirit, which you ought to make the ſpirit of your own life.

I deſire every reader to dwell awhile upon this reflection, and perhaps he will find more conviction from it than he imagines. Every one can tell how good and pious he would have ſome people to be; every one knows how wiſe and reaſonable a thing it is in a *biſhop*, to be entirely above the world, and be an eminent example of Chriſtian perfection. As ſoon as you think of a *wiſe and ancient biſhop*, you fancy ſome exalted degree of piety, a living example of all thoſe holy tempers which you find deſcribed in the goſpel.

19. Now if you aſk yourſelf, what is the happieſt thing for a *young clergyman* to do? You muſt be forced to anſwer, that nothing can be ſo happy and glorious for him, as to be like that excellent, holy biſhop.

* If you go on, and aſk what is the happieſt thing for a *young gentleman* or his *ſiſters* to do? The anſwer muſt be the ſame; that nothing can be ſo happy or glorious for them, as to live in ſuch habits of piety, in ſuch exerciſes of a divine life, as this good old biſhop does. For every thing that is great and glorious in religion, is as much the true glory of every man or woman, as it is the glory of any biſhop. If high degrees

of

of divine love, if fervent charity, if ſpotleſs purity, if heavenly affection, if conſtant mortification, if frequent devotion, be the beſt and happieſt way of life for any Chriſtian, it is ſo for every Chriſtian.

And as the wiſeſt *biſhop* in the world is he who lives in the greateſt heights of holineſs, who is moſt exemplary in all the exerciſes of a divine life; ſo the *wiſeſt youth*, the *wiſeſt woman*, whether married or unmarried, is ſhe that lives in the higheſt degrees of Chriſtian holineſs, and all the exerciſes of a divine and heavenly life.

CHAP. IX.

Shewing how great devotion fills our lives with the greateſt peace and happineſs that can be enjoyed in this world.

1. SOME people will perhaps object, that this living unto God in all that we do, is too great a *reſtraint* upon human life; and that, by depriving ourſelves of ſo many innocent pleaſures, we ſhall render our lives, *dull*, *uneaſy*, and *melancholy*.

* It will produce juſt the contrary effect. Inſtead of making our lives dull and melancholy, it will render them full of content and ſtrong ſatisfactions; as by theſe rules we only change the childiſh ſatisfactions of our *vain* and *ſickly*

paſſions, for the ſolid enjoyments, and real happineſs of a *ſound mind*.

For as there is no true foundation for comfort in life, but in the aſſurance that a wiſe and good God governeth the world: ſo the more we find out God in every thing, the more we apply to him in every place, the more we look up to him in all our actions, the more we conform to his will, the more we act according to his wiſdom, and imitate his goodneſs, by ſo much the more do we enjoy God, and increaſe all that is *happy* and *comfortable* in human life.

And it is plain, he that is endeavouring to ſubdue all thoſe paſſions of *pride*, *envy*, and *ambition*, which religion oppoſes, is doing more to make himſelf happy, even in this life, than he that is contriving means to indulge them.

* For theſe paſſions are the cauſes of all the diſquiets of human life: they are the *dropſies* and *fevers* of our minds, vexing them with falſe appetites, and reſtleſs cravings after ſuch things as we do not want, and ſpoiling our taſte for thoſe things which are our proper good.

2. * Do but imagine that you ſome where or other ſaw a man, that propoſed *reaſon* as the rule of all his actions; that had no deſires but after ſuch things as *nature* wants, and *religion* approves; that was as pure from all the motions of *pride*, *envy*, and *covetouſneſs*, as from thoughts of *murder*; that in this freedom from worldly paſſions, he had a ſoul full of divine love, wiſhing

ing and praying that all men may have what they want of worldly things, and be partakers of eternal glory.

Do but fancy a man living in this manner, and your own conſcience will immediately tell you, that he is the happieſt man in the world, and that it is not in the power of the richeſt fancy to invent any higher happineſs in the preſent life.

And, on the other hand, if you ſuppoſe him to be in any degree *leſs perfect*; if you ſuppoſe him but ſubject to one fooliſh fondneſs, or vain paſſion, your own conſcience will tell you, that he ſo far leſſens his own happineſs, and robs himſelf of the true enjoyment of his other virtues. So true is it, that the *more* we live by the rules of religion, the more peaceful and happy we are.

3. Again, as it thus appears that real happineſs is only to be had from religion; ſo the ſame truth will appear from a conſideration of *human miſery*. If we look into the world, and view the troubles of human life, we ſhall find that they are all owing to our irreligious paſſions.

Now all trouble and uneaſineſs is founded in the *want* of ſomething or other; would we therefore know the true cauſe of our troubles and diſquiets, we muſt find out the cauſe of our wants; becauſe that which creates and increaſes

our wants, does in the same degree create and increase our troubles and disquiets.

God Almighty has sent us into the world with very few wants: *meat*, and *drink*, and *cloathing*, are the only things necessary in life; and as these are only our present needs, so the present world is well furnished to supply these needs.

If a man had half the world in his power, he can make no more of it than this; as he wants it only to support an *animal* life, so is it unable to do any thing else for him, or to afford him any other happiness.

4. This is the state of man, born with few wants, and into a large world, very capable of supplying them. So that one would reasonably suppose, men should pass their lives in content and thankfulness to God; at least, that they should be free from violent disquiets and vexations, as being placed in a world that has more than enough to relieve all their wants.

But if to all this we add, that this short life, thus furnished with all that we want in it, is only a short passage to eternal glory, where we shall be cloathed with the brightness of *angels*, and enter into the joys of God, we might still more reasonably expect, that human life should be a state of peace, and joy, and delight in God. Thus it would certainly be, if reason had its full power over us.

* But alas, though God, and nature, and reason, make human life thus free from wants; yet our

our paſſions, in rebellion againſt God, againſt *nature* and *reaſon*, create a new world of evils, and fill human life with imaginary wants, and vain diſquiets.

* The man of *pride* has a thouſand wants, which only his own pride has *created*; and theſe render him as full of trouble, as if God had created him with a *thouſand appetites*, without creating any thing that was proper to ſatisfy them. *Envy* and *ambition* have alſo their endleſs wants, which diſquiet the ſouls of men, and by their contradictory motions render them as fooliſhly miſerable as thoſe that want to *fly* and *creep* at the ſame time.

Let but any complaining, diſquieted man, tell you the ground of his uneaſineſs, and you will plainly ſee that he is the author of his own torment; that he is vexing himſelf at ſome imaginary evil, which will ceaſe to torment him as ſoon as he is content to be that which God, and nature, and reaſon, require him to be.

5. * If you ſhould ſee a man paſſing his days in diſquiet, becauſe he could not *walk* upon the *water*, or *catch birds* as they fly by him, you would readily confeſs that ſuch an one might thank himſelf for ſuch uneaſineſs. But now, if you look into the moſt tormenting diſquiets of life, you will find them all thus abſurd. People are only tormented by their own folly, and vexing themſelves at ſuch things as no more concern them, nor are any more their proper

good, than *walking* upon the *water*, or *catching birds*.

* What can you conceive more filly and extravagant, than a man racking his brains, and ſtudying night and day how to fly? Wandering from his own houſe and home, wearying himſelf with *climbing* upon every aſcent, *cringing* and *courting* every body he meets, to lift him up from the ground, bruiſing himſelf with continual falls, and at laſt breaking his neck? And all this, from an imagination that it would be glorious to have the eyes of people gazing up at him, and mighty happy to *eat*, and *drink*, and *ſleep*, at the top of the higheſt trees in the kingdom. Would you not readily own that ſuch a one was only diſquieted at his *own folly?*

If you aſk, what it ſignifies to ſuppoſe ſuch filly creatures as are no where to be found in human life?

It may be anſwered, that wherever you ſee an *ambitious* man, there you ſee this *vain and ſenſeleſs flyer*.

6. * Again, if you ſhould ſee a man that had a large *pond* of *water*, yet living in *continual thirſt*, not ſuffering himſelf to drink *half a draught*, for fear of leſſening his pond; if you ſhould ſee him waſting his time and ſtrength, in *fetching more* water to his pond, always *thirſty*, yet always carrying a *bucket* of water in his hand, watching early and late to catch the *drops* of rain,

rain, gaping after every cloud, and running greedily into every *mire* and mud, in hopes of water, and always ſtudying how to make every *ditch* empty itſelf into his *pond.* If you ſhould ſee him grow *grey* and *old* in theſe anxious labours, and at laſt end a *careful, thirſty* life, by falling into his own *pond:* would you not ſay, that ſuch a one was not only the author of his own diſquiets, but was fooliſh enough to be reckoned amongſt *ideots* and *madmen?* But yet fooliſh and abſurd as this character is, it does not repreſent half the follies and abſurd diſquiets of the *covetous man.*

I could now eaſily proceed to ſhew the ſame effects of all our other paſſions, and make it plainly appear, that all our miſeries, vexations, and complaints, are entirely of our own making, and that in the ſame abſurd manner, as in theſe inſtances of the *covetous* and *ambitious* man. * Look where you will, you will ſee all *worldly vexations*, but like the vexation of him that was always in *mire* and *mud* in ſearch of water to drink, when he had more at home than was ſufficient for an *hundred horſes.*

7. * *Cælia* is always telling you how *provoked* ſhe is, what *intolerable ſhocking* things happen to her, what *monſtrous* uſage ſhe ſuffers, and what *vexations* ſhe meets with every where. She tells you that her patience is quite worn out, and there is no bearing the behaviour of people. Every *aſſembly* that ſhe is at, ſends her home provoked;

provoked; something or other has been said or done, that no reasonable, well bred person ought to bear. *Poor people* that want her charity, are sent away with hasty answers; not because she has not a heart to part with any money, but because she is *too full* of some trouble of her own, to attend to the complaints of others. *Celia* has no business upon her hands, but to receive the income of a plentiful fortune: but yet by the doleful turn of her mind, you would be apt to think that she had neither *food* nor *lodging*. If you see her look more pale than ordinary, if her lips tremble when she speaks to you, it is because she is just come from a *visit*, where *Lupus* took no notice at all of her, but talked all the time to *Lucinda*, who has not half her fortune. When cross accidents have so disordered her spirits, that she is forced to send for the *doctor* to make her able to eat; she tells him, in great anger at providence, that she never was well since she was born, and that she envies every beggar that she sees in health.

This is the unquiet life of *Celia*, who has nothing to torment her but her own *spirit*.

If you could inspire her with *Christian humility*, you need do no more to make her happy. This virtue would make her thankful to God for half so much health as she has had, and help her to enjoy more for the time to come. This would keep off *tremblings* and *loss* of appetite, and her blood would need nothing else to sweeten it.

8. I have just touched upon these absurd characters, to convince you in the plainest manner, that religion is so far from rendering a life *dull*, *anxious*, and *uncomfortable*, that on the contrary, all the miseries, vexations, and complaints that are in the world, are owing to the want of religion; being directly caused by those absurd passions, which religion teaches us to deny.

9. Most people indeed confess, that religion preserves us from many evils, and helps us in many respects to a more happy enjoyment of ourselves; but then, they imagine, this is only true of such a *moderate share* of religion, as restrains us from the excesses of our passions. They suppose that the *strict rules* of piety must make our lives *dull* and *uncomfortable*.

This objection supposes, that religion, *moderately* practised, adds to our happiness; but that heights of religion have a contrary effect.

* It supposes therefore, that it is happy to be kept from the *excesses* of envy, but unhappy to be kept from *other* degrees of *envy*; that it is happy to be delivered from a *boundless* ambition, but unhappy to be without a *moderate* ambition. It supposes also, that the happiness of life consists in a *mixture* of virtue and vice, of ambition and humility, charity and envy, heavenly affection and covetousness. All which is as absurd, as to suppose that it is happy to be free from excessive pains, but unhappy to be without moderate pains;

or that the happineſs of *health* conſiſted in being partly ſick, and partly well.

But if humility be the peace and reſt of the ſoul, then no one has ſo much happineſs from humility, as he that is the moſt humble. If exceſſive envy is a torment of the ſoul, he is moſt happy who extinguiſhes every ſpark of envy.

Thus it is in every virtue: the more you act up to every degree of it, the more happineſs you have from it. And ſo of every vice: if you only abate its exceſſes, you do but little for yourſelf; but if you reject it in all degrees, then you feel the true eaſe of a *reformed* mind.

10. And, as to thoſe enjoyments which piety requireth us to deny ourſelves, this deprives us of no real comfort.

For, *1ſt*, Piety requires us to renounce no ways of life, where we can act *reaſonably*, and offer what we do to God. All ways of life, all enjoyments that are within theſe bounds, are no way denied us by the ſtricteſt rules of piety. Whatever you can do, or enjoy, as in the preſence of God, as his ſervant, as his rational creature; all that you can perform conformably to a rational nature, is allowed by the laws of piety. And will you think that your life will be uncomfortable, unleſs you may diſpleaſe God, and act contrary to that reaſon and wiſdom which he has implanted in you?

As for thoſe ſatisfactions, which we dare not offer to a holy God, which are only invented by the

the folly and corruption of the world, which inflame our paſſions, and ſink our ſouls into groſſneſs and ſenſuality, and render us incapable of the divine favour either here or hereafter, ſurely it can be no uncomfortable thing to be reſcued by religion from ſuch ſelf-murder, and to be rendered capable of eternal happineſs.

11. * Let us ſuppoſe a *perſon* placed ſomewhere alone, in the midſt of a variety of things which he did not know how to uſe; that he has by him *bread*, *wine*, *water*, *golden duſt*, *iron chains*, *gravel*, *garments*, *fire*. Let it be ſuppoſed, that he has no knowledge, nor any directions from his *ſenſes*, how to quench his *thirſt*, or ſatisfy his *hunger*, or make *any uſe* of the things about him. Let it be ſuppoſed, that in his drought he puts *golden duſt* into his eyes; when his *eyes* ſmart, he puts *wine* into his *ears*: that in his hunger, he puts *gravel* in his mouth; that in pain, he loads himſelf with *iron chains*; that feeling cold, he puts his feet in the water; that being frighted at the fire, he runs away from it; that being weary, he makes a *ſeat* of his *bread*. Let it be ſuppoſed, that thro' his ignorance of the right uſe of the things that are about him, he will vainly torment himſelf whilſt he lives; and at laſt die, *blinded* with *duſt*, *choaked* with *gravel*, and loaded with *irons*. Let it be ſuppoſed, that ſome good being came to him, and ſhewed him the nature and uſe of all the things that were about him, and gave him ſuch

ſtrict

ſtrict rules of uſing them, as would certainly, if obſerved, make him the happier for all that he had, and deliver him from the pains of hunger, and thirſt, and cold.

Now, could you with any reaſon affirm, that thoſe ſtrict rules of uſing thoſe things that were about him, had rendered that poor man's life *dull* and *uncomfortable?*

12. This is, in ſome meaſure, a repreſentation of the *ſtrict* rules of religion; they only relieve our ignorance, ſave us from tormenting ourſelves, and teach us to uſe *every thing* about us to our advantage.

Man is placed in a world full of variety of things; his ignorance makes him uſe many of them as abſurdly, as the man that put *duſt* in his *eyes* to relieve his *thirſt*, or put on chains to remove pain.

Religion therefore here comes in to his relief, and gives him *ſtrict rules* of uſing every thing that is about him; that by ſo uſing them ſuitably to his own nature and the nature of the things, he may have always the pleaſure of receiving benefit from them. It ſhews him what is ſtrictly right in meat, and drink, and cloaths; and that he has nothing elſe to expect from the things of this world, but to ſatisfy ſuch wants of his own; and then to extend his aſſiſtance to all his brethren, that, as far as he is able, he may help all his fellow-creatures to the ſame benefit from the world that he hath.

13. It

13. * It tells him, that this world is incapable of giving him any other happineſs; and that all endeavours to be happy in *heaps* of *money*, or *acres* of *land*, in fine *cloaths*, rich *beds*, ſtately *equipage*, and *ſhew* and *ſplendour*, are only vain endeavours, ignorant attempts after impoſſibilities; theſe things be no more able to give the leaſt degree of happineſs, than *duſt* in the eyes can cure thirſt, or *gravel* in the mouth ſatisfy hunger; but, like duſt and gravel miſapplied, will only ſerve to render him more unhappy by ſuch an ignorant miſuſe of them.

It tells him, altho' this world can do no more for him, than ſatisfy theſe wants of the body; yet there is a much greater good prepared for man, than eating, drinking, and dreſſing; that it is yet inviſible to his eyes, being too glorious for the apprehenſion of fleſh and blood; but reſerved for him to enter upon, as ſoon as this ſhort life is over; where, in a new body, formed to an angelic likeneſs, he ſhall dwell in the light and glory of God to all eternity.

* It tells him, that this ſtate of glory will be given to all thoſe that make a *right uſe* of the things of this preſent world; who do not blind themſelves with *golden duſt*, or eat *gravel*, or groan under loads of *iron* of their own putting on; but uſe *bread*, *water*, *wine*, and *garments* for ſuch ends as are according to *nature* and *reaſon*; and who with faith and thankfulneſs worſhip the kind

kind giver of all that they enjoy here, and hope for hereafter.

14. Now can any one ſay, that the ſtricteſt rules of ſuch a religion as this, debar us of any of the comforts of life? Might it not as juſtly be ſaid of thoſe rules, that only hindred a man from *choaking* himſelf with *gravel?* For the ſtrictneſs of theſe rules only conſiſts in the exactneſs of their rectitude.

* Who would complain of the ſevere ſtrictneſs of a law, that without any exception forbad the putting of duſt into our eyes? Who could think it too rigid, that there were no abatements? Now this is the *ſtrictneſs* of religion; it requires nothing of us ſtrictly, or without abatements, but where every degree of the thing is wrong, where every indulgence does us hurt.

* If religion forbids all inſtances of *revenge* without exception, 'tis becauſe all revenge is of the nature of *poiſon*; and though we don't take ſo much as to put an end to life, yet if we take any at all, it corrupts the maſs of blood, and makes it difficult to be reſtored to our former health.

If religion commands an *univerſal charity*, to love our neighbour as ourſelves, to forgive and pray for all our enemies without any *reſerve*, 'tis becauſe all degrees of love are degrees of happineſs, that ſtregthen and ſupport the divine life of the ſoul, and are as neceſſary to its health

and

and happineſs, as proper food is neceſſary to the health and happineſs of the body.

* If religion has laws againſt *laying up treaſures upon earth*, and commands us to be content with food and raiment; 'tis becauſe every other uſe of the world is abuſing it to our own vexation, and turning its conveniences into ſnares and traps to deſtroy us. 'Tis becauſe this *plainneſs* and *ſimplicity* of life, ſecure us from the cares and pains of reſtleſs pride and envy, and make it eaſier to keep that ſtrait road that will carry us to eternal life.

15. If religion requires us ſometimes to *faſt* and *deny* our natural appetites, 'tis to leſſen that ſtruggle and war that is in our nature; 'tis to render our bodies fitter inſtruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; 'tis to dry up the ſprings of our paſſions that war againſt the ſoul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations. So that altho' theſe abſtinences give ſome pain to the body, yet they ſo leſſen the power of bodily appetites and paſſions, and ſo increaſe our taſte of ſpiritual joys, that even theſe ſeverities of religion, when practiſed with diſcretion, add much to the comfort of our lives.

If religion calleth us to a life of watching and prayer, 'tis becauſe we live amongſt a crowd of enemies, and are always in need of the aſſiſtance of God. If we are to confeſs and bewail our ſins, 'tis becauſe ſuch confeſſions relieve the mind,

mind, and reſtore it to eaſe; as *burdens* and *weights* taken off the ſhoulders, relieve the body, and make it eaſier to itſelf. If we are to be frequent and fervent in holy petitions, 'tis to keep us ſteady in the ſight of our true good, and that we may never want the happineſs of a lively faith, a joyful hope, and well-grounded truſt in God. If we are to pray often, 'tis that we may be often happy in ſuch ſecret joys as only prayer can give; in ſuch communications of the divine preſence, as will fill our minds with all the happineſs that beings not in heaven, are capable of.

If religion commands us to live *wholly* unto God, and to *do all* to his glory, 'tis becauſe every other way is living *wholly* againſt ourſelves, and will end in our ſhame and confuſion of face.

16. * As every thing is *dark*, that God does not enlighten; as every thing is *ſenſeleſs*, that has not its ſhare of knowledge from him; as nothing *lives* but by partaking of life from him; as nothing *exiſts*, but becauſe he commands it to be; ſo there is no *glory* or *greatneſs*, but what is the glory or greatneſs of God.

We indeed may talk of *human glory*, as we may talk of *human life* or *human knowledge*; but as we are ſure that human life implies nothing of our *own*, but a dependent living in God, or enjoying ſo much life in God; ſo human glory, whenever we find it, muſt be only ſo much glory as we enjoy in the glory of God.

* This

* This is the ſtate of all creatures, whether men or angels; as they make not themſelves, ſo if they are great, they are only great receivers of the gifts of God; their *power* can only be ſo much of the divine power acting in them; their *wiſdom* can be only ſo much of the divine wiſdom ſhining within them; and their *light* and *glory*, only ſo much of the life and glory of God ſhining upon them.

17. * As they are not *men* or *angels*, becauſe they had a mind to be ſo, but becauſe the will of God formed them to be what they are; ſo they cannot enjoy this or that happineſs of men or angels, becauſe they have a mind to it, but becauſe it is the will of God, that ſuch things be the happineſs of men, and ſuch things the happineſs of angels. But now, if God be thus all in all; if his will is thus the meaſure of all things and all natures; if nothing can be done, but by his power; if nothing can be ſeen, but by a light from him; if we have nothing to fear, but from his juſtice; if we have nothing to hope for, but from his goodneſs; if this is the nature of man, thus helpleſs in himſelf; if this is the ſtate of all creatures, as well thoſe in *heaven*, as thoſe on *earth*; if they are nothing, can do nothing, can ſuffer no pain, nor feel any happineſs, but ſo far, and in ſuch degrees, as the power of God does all this: if this be the ſtate of things, then how can we have the leaſt glimpſe of joy or comfort? How can we have any peaceful enjoyment

enjoyment of ourſelves, but by living wholly unto God, uſing and doing every thing conformably to his will? A life thus devoted unto God, looking wholly unto him in all our actions, and doing all things ſuitable to his glory, is ſo far from being dull, and uncomfortable, that it creates new comforts in every thing that we do.

18. On the contrary, would you ſee how *happy* they are who live according to their own wills, who cannot ſubmit to the *dull* and *melancholy* buſineſs of a life devoted to God? Look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given one talent.

He could not bear the thoughts of uſing his talent according to the will of him from whom he had it, and therefore he choſe to make himſelf happier in another way of his own. *Lord*, ſays he, *I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hadſt not ſown, and gathering where thou hadſt not ſtrawed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth. Lo there thou haſt that is thine.* Matt. xxv. 24.

Here you ſee how happy this man made himſelf by not acting *wholly* according to his Lord's will. It was, according to his own account, an happineſs of *murmuring* and *diſcontent*; *I knew thee*, ſays he, *that thou waſt an hard man:* it was an happineſs of *fears* and *apprehenſions*; *I was*, ſays he, *afraid:* it was an happineſs of *vain labours* and *fruitleſs travels: I went*, ſays he, *and hid thy talent*; and after having been awhile the

ſport

ſport of fooliſh paſſion, tormenting fears, and fruitleſs labours, he is rewarded with darkneſs, eternal weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

19. Now this is the happineſs of all thoſe, who look upon *ſtrict* piety, that is, a right uſe of their talent, to be a dull and melancholy thing.

They may live awhile free from the reſtraints and directions of religion; but inſtead thereof, they muſt be under the abſurd government of their paſſions: they muſt, like the man in the *parable*, live in *murmurings* and *diſcontents*, in *fears* and *apprehenſions*. They may avoid the labour of doing good, of ſpending their time devoutly, of laying up treaſures in heaven, of cloathing the naked, of viſiting the ſick; but then they muſt, like this man, have *labours* and *pains* in vain, that tend to no uſe or advantage, that do no good either to themſelves, or others; they muſt *travel*, and *labour*, and *work*, and *dig*, to hide their talent in the earth. They muſt, like him, at their Lord's coming, be convicted out of their own mouths, be accuſed by their own hearts, and have every thing that they have ſaid and thought of religion, be made to ſhew the juſtice of their condemnation to eternal darkneſs, weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

This is the purchaſe that they make, who avoid the ſtrictneſs of religion, in order to live happily.

20. On the other hand, would you see a ſhort deſcription of the happineſs of a life rightly employed, wholly devoted to God, you muſt look at the man in the *parable*, to whom his Lord had given five talents. *Lord*, ſays he, *thou deliveredſt unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beſides them five talents more. His Lord ſaid unto him, well done thou good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Here you ſee a life that is wholly intent upon the improvement of the talents, that is devoted wholly unto God, is a ſtate of happineſs, proſperous labours, and glorious ſucceſs. Here are not, as in the former caſe, any *uneaſy paſſions, murmurings, vain fears* and *fruitleſs labours*. The man is not toiling, and digging in the earth for no end or advantage; but his labours proſper in his hands, his happineſs increaſes upon him, the bleſſing of five becomes the bleſſing of ten talents; and he is received with a *Well done good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

21. Now, as the caſe of theſe men in the *parable* left nothing elſe to their choice, but either to be happy in uſing their gifts to the *glory* of their Lord, or miſerable by uſing them according to their *own humours* and *fancies*; ſo the ſtate of Chriſtianity leaves us no other choice.

* All

* All that we have, all that we are, all that we enjoy, are only ſo many talents from God: if we uſe them to the end of a pious and holy life, our five talents will become ten, and our labours will carry us into the joy of our Lord; but if we abuſe them to the gratification of our own paſſions, ſacrificing the gifts of God to our own pride and vanity, we ſhall live here in vain labours and fooliſh anxieties, ſhunning religion as a melancholy thing, accuſing our Lord as a hard maſter, and then fall into everlaſting miſery.

We may for awhile amuſe ourſelves with *names*, and *ſounds*, and *ſhadows* of happineſs, we may talk of this or that greatneſs and dignity; but if we deſire real happineſs, we have no other poſſible way to it, but by improving our talents, by ſo holily and piouſly uſing the *powers* and *faculties* of *men* in this preſent ſtate, that we may be happy and glorious in the *powers* and *faculties* of *angels* in the world to come.

How ignorant therefore are they of the nature of religion, of the nature of man, and the nature of God, who think a life of *ſtrict piety* to be a *dull* and *uncomfortable* ſtate, when it is ſo plain and certain, that there is neither comfort nor joy to be found in any thing elſe?

CHAP. X.

The happineſs of a life wholly devoted unto God, farther proved, from the vanity, *and the* ridiculous, poor *enjoyments which they are forced to take up with, who live according to their own humours. This repreſented in various characters.*

1. WE may ſee yet more of the happineſs of a life devoted to God, by conſidering the poor contrivances for happineſs, and the contemptible ways of life, which they are thrown into, who are ſeeking after happineſs by other methods.

If one looks at their lives, who live by no rule but their own humours and fancies; if one ſees what it is, which they call *joy*, and *greatneſs*, and *happineſs*; if one ſees how they rejoice and repent, change and fly from one deluſion to another, one ſhall find great reaſon to rejoice, that God hath appointed a *narrow* way that leadeth unto life, and that we are not left to the folly of our own minds, or forced to take up with ſuch ſhadows of happineſs, as the folly of the world has invented. I ſay *invented*, becauſe thoſe

thoſe things which make up the *joy and happineſs* of the world, are mere *inventions*, which have no foundation in nature, are no way the proper good or happineſs of man, no way perfect either his body or his mind.

2. * As, for inſtance, when a man propoſes to be happy in ways of *ambition*, by raiſing himſelf to ſome *imaginary heights* above other people. This is an *invention* of happineſs which has no foundation in nature, but it is as mere a cheat of our own making, as if a man ſhould intend to make himſelf happy by *climbing* up a *ladder*.

* If a *woman* ſeeks for happineſs from *fine colours* or *ſpots* upon *her face*, from *jewels* and *rich cloaths*, this is as merely an *invention* of happineſs, as contrary to *nature* and *reaſon*, as if ſhe ſhould propoſe to make herſelf happy, by painting a *poſt*, and putting the ſame finery upon it. It is in this reſpect that I call theſe mere *inventions* of happineſs, becauſe neither God, nor nature, nor reaſon, hath appointed them as ſuch; but whatever appears joyful or happy in them, is entirely invented by the blindneſs and vanity of our own minds.

And it is on theſe inventions of happineſs, that I deſire you to caſt your eye, that you may thence learn how *great a good* religion is, which delivers you from ſuch a multitude of follies, and vain purſuits, as are the torment of

minds that wander from their true happineſs in God.

3. * Look at *Flatus*, and learn how miſerable they are, who are left to the folly of their own paſſions.

Flatus is rich and in health, yet always uneaſy, and always ſearching after happineſs. Every time you viſit him, you find ſome new project in his head; he is eager upon it as ſomething that is more worth his while, and will do more for him, than any thing that is already paſt. Every new thing ſo ſeizes him, that if you was to take him from it, he would think himſelf quite undone. His ſanguine temper, and ſtrong paſſions, promiſe him ſo much happineſs in every thing, that he is always cheated, and is ſatisfied with nothing.

At his firſt ſetting out in life, *fine cloaths* was his delight. His enquiry was only after the beſt *taylors* and *peruke-makers*; and he had no thoughts of excelling in any thing but *dreſs*. He ſpared no expence, but carried every nicety to its greateſt height. But this happineſs not anſwering his expectations, he left off his *brocades*, put on a plain coat, railed at *fops* and *beaux*, and gave himſelf up to *gaming* with great eagerneſs.

This new pleaſure ſatisfied him for ſome time; he envied no other way of life. But being by the fate of *play*, drawn into a *duel*, where he narrowly eſcaped his death, he left off the *dice*, and

and ſought for happineſs no longer amongſt the *gameſters*.

4. The next thing that ſeized his wandering imagination, was the diverſions of the *town*; and for more than a twelvemonth, you heard him talk of nothing but *ladies*, *drawing-rooms*, *birth-nights*, *plays*, *balls*, and *aſſemblies*; but growing ſick of theſe, he had recourſe to hard *drinking*. He had now many a merry night, and met with ſtronger joys than any he had felt before. And here he had thoughts of ſetting up his ſtaff, and looking out no farther; but unluckily falling into a *fever*, he grew angry at all ſtrong liquors, and took his leave of the happineſs of being drunk.

The next attempt after happineſs carried him into the *field*. For two or three years nothing was ſo happy as *hunting*. He entered upon it with all his ſoul, and leaped over more *hedges* and *ditches* than had ever been known in ſo ſhort a time. You never ſaw him but in a *green coat*. He was the envy of all that blow the *horn*, and always ſpoke to his dogs in great propriety of language. If you meet him at home in a bad day, you would hear him blow his horn, and be entertained with the ſurprizing accidents of the laſt *noble chace*. No ſooner had *Flatus* outdone all the world in the breed and education of his *dogs*, built new *kennels*, new *ſtables*, and bought a new *hunting-ſeat*, but he got ſight of another happineſs, hated the ſenſeleſs noiſe and hurry of

hunting, gave away his dogs, and was for ſome time after deep in the *pleaſures* of *building*.

5. Now he invents new kinds of *dovecoats*, and has ſuch contrivances in his *barns* and *ſtables*, as were never ſeen before. He wonders at the dulneſs of the old builders, is wholly bent upon the improvement of *architecture*, and will hardly hang a door in the ordinary way. He tells his friends, that he never was ſo delighted in any thing in his life; that he has more happineſs amongſt his *brick* and *mortar*, than ever he had at *court*: and that he is contriving how to have ſome little matter to do that way as long as he lives.

After this, he was a great *ſtudent* for one whole year. He was up early and late at his *Italian grammar*, that he might have the happineſs of underſtanding the *opera*, and not be like thoſe *unreaſonable* people, that are pleaſed with they don't know what.

Flatus is very ill-natured, or otherwiſe, juſt as his affairs happen to be when you viſit him. If you find him when ſome project is almoſt wore out, you will find a peeviſh, ill-bred man; but if you had ſeen him juſt as he entered upon his *riding regimen*, or begun to excel in ſounding the horn, you had been ſaluted with great civility.

Flatus is now at a full ſtand, and is doing what he never did in his life before. He is *reaſoning* and *reflecting* with himſelf. He loſes ſeveral days,

days, in considering which of his *cast-off* ways of life he should try again.

But here a new project comes in to his relief. He is now living upon *herbs*, and running about the country, to get himself in as *good wind* as any *running footman* in the kingdom.

6. I have been thus circumstantial in so many foolish particulars, because I hope that every particular folly that you here see, will naturally turn itself into an argument for the wisdom and happiness of a religious life.

If I could lay before you a particular account of all the circumstances of terror and distress, that daily attend a life at *sea*, the more particular I was in the account, the more I should make you feel and rejoice in the happiness of living upon the *land*.

In like manner, the more I enumerate the *follies*, *anxieties*, *delusions*, and restless desires which go thro' every part of a life devoted to worldly enjoyments, the more you must be affected with that peace, and rest, and solid content, which religion gives to the souls of men.

7. But you will perhaps say, that the ridiculous, restless life of *Flatus*, is not the common state of those who neglect the strict rules of religion; and that therefore it is not so great an argument of the happiness of a religious life.

I answer, that I am afraid it is one of the most *general characters* in life; and that few people can read it, without seeing something in it that

belongs to themſelves. For where ſhall we find that wiſe and happy man, who has not been eagerly purſuing different appearances of happineſs, ſometimes thinking it was here, and ſometimes there?

And if people were to divide their lives into particular ſtages, and aſk themſelves what they were purſuing, or what it was which they had chiefly in view, when they were *twenty* years old, what at *twenty-five*, what at *thirty*, what at *forty*, what at *fifty*, and ſo on, till they were brought to their laſt bed, numbers of people would find, that they had purſued as many different appearances of happineſs, as are to be ſeen in the life of *Flatus*.

And thus it muſt be, more or leſs, with all who propoſe any other happineſs, than that which ariſes from a ſtrict and regular piety.

8. But, *ſecondly*, let it be granted, that the *generality* of people are not of ſuch reſtleſs, fickle tempers as *Flatus*, the difference is only this, *Flatus* is continually changing and trying ſomething new, but others are content with ſome one ſtate; they don't leave *gaming*, and then fall to *hunting*, but follow one or the other all their life. Some have ſo much *ſteadineſs* in their tempers, that they ſeek after no other happineſs, but that of *heaping* up riches; others grow old in the ſports of the *field*; others are content to *drink* themſelves to death, without the leaſt enquiry after any other happineſs.

Now, is there any thing more *happy* or *reasonable*, in such a life as this, than in the life of *Flatus?* Is it not as wise and happy, to be constantly changing from one thing to another, as to be nothing else but a *gatherer* of money, a *hunter*, a *gamester*, or a *drunkard*, all your life?

Shall religion be looked upon as a burden, as a dull and melancholy state, for calling men from such *happiness* as this, to labour after the perfection of their nature, and prepare themselves for an endless state of joy and glory in the presence of God?

9. * But turn your eyes now another way, and let the *trifling joys*, the *gewgaw* happiness of *Feliciana*, teach you how wise they are, what delusion they escape, whose hearts and hopes are fixed upon happiness in God.

If you was to live with *Feliciana* but one half year, you would see all the happiness that she is to have as long as she lives. She has no more to come, but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleased once, but thro' a littleness of mind, and want of thought.

She is to be again dressed fine, and keep her visiting-day. She is again to change the colour of her *cloaths*, again to have a new *head*. She is again to see who acts best at the *playhouse*, and who sings finest at the *opera*. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily, and politely, about nothing.

She is to be again delighted with ſome new faſhion, and again angry at the change of ſome old one. She is to be again at cards, and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleaſed with hypocritical compliments, and again diſturbed with imaginary affronts. She is to be again delighted with her good luck at *gaming*, and again tormented with the loſs of her money. She is again to prepare herſelf for a birth-night, and again to ſee the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town, again to have ſecret intelligence of private amours, and early notice of marriages, quarrels and partings.

If you ſee her come out of her chariot more briſkly than uſual, converſe with more ſpirit, and ſeem fuller of joy than ſhe was laſt week, it is becauſe there is ſome ſurpriſing new dreſs, or new diverſion juſt come to town.

10. Theſe are all the *ſubſtantial* and *regular* parts of *Feliciana*'s happineſs; and ſhe never knew a pleaſant day in her life, but it was owing to ſome one, or more, of theſe things.

It is for this happineſs, that ſhe has always been deaf to the reaſonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and chearful to conſider what is *right* or *wrong* in regard to eternity; or to liſten to the ſound of ſuch dull words, as *wiſdom*, *piety*, and *devotion*.

It is for fear of loſing ſome of this happineſs, that ſhe dares not meditate on the immortality of

of her ſoul, conſider her relation to God, or turn her thoughts towards thoſe joys, which make ſaints and angels infinitely happy in the preſence and glory of God.

But let it be obſerved, that as poor a round of happineſs as this appears, yet moſt women that avoid the reſtraints of religion for a gay life, muſt be content with very ſmall parts of it. As they have not *Feliciana*'s fortune; ſo they muſt give away the comforts of a pious life, for a very ſmall part of her happineſs.

11. And if you look into the world, and obſerve the lives of thoſe women, whom no arguments can perſuade to live wholly unto God, you will find moſt of them ſuch, as loſe all the comforts of religion without gaining the tenth part of *Feliciana*'s happineſs. They are ſuch as ſpend their times and fortunes only in mimicking the pleaſures of richer people; and rather look and long after, than enjoy thoſe deluſions, which are not to be purchaſed but by conſiderable fortunes.

But if a woman of *high* birth and *great* fortune, having read the goſpel, ſhould rather wiſh to be an *under ſervant* in ſome pious family, where wiſdom, piety, and great devotion, directed all the actions of every day; if ſhe ſhould rather wiſh this, than to live at the top of *Feliciana*'s happineſs, I ſhould think her neither *mad* nor *melancholy*; but that ſhe judged as rightly of the ſpirit of the goſpel, as if ſhe had rather

wiſhed

wiſhed to be *poor Lazarus* at the gate, than to be the rich man *cloathed in purple and fine linen, and faring ſumptuouſly every day.*

* But to proceed, would you know what an happineſs it is, to be governed by the wiſdom of religion, look at the poor condition of *Succus*, whoſe greateſt happineſs is a *good night*'s reſt in bed, and a *good meal* when he is up. When he talks of happineſs, it is always in ſuch expreſſions as ſhews you, that he has only his bed and his dinner in his thoughts.

This regard to his *meals* and *repoſe*, makes *Succus* order all the reſt of his time with relation to them. He will undertake no buſineſs that may hurry his ſpirits, or break in upon his hours of *eating* and *reſt*. If he reads, it ſhall be only for half an hour, becauſe that is ſufficient to amuſe the ſpirits; and he will read ſomething that may make him laugh, as rendering the body fitter for its *food* and *reſt*; or, if he has a mind at any time to indulge a grave thought, he has recourſe to a uſeful treatiſe upon the *antient cookery*. *Succus* is an enemy to all *party matters*, having made it an obſervation, that there is as good eating amongſt the *whigs* as the *tories*.

He talks coolly and moderately upon all ſubjects, and is as fearful of falling into a paſſion, as of catching cold; being very poſitive they are both equally injurious to the *ſtomach*. If ever you ſee him more hot than ordinary, it is upon

upon ſome provoking occaſion, when the diſpute about cookery runs high, or in the defence of ſome beloved diſh, which has often made him happy. But he has been ſo long upon theſe ſubjects, is ſo well acquainted with all that can be ſaid on both ſides, and has ſo often anſwered all objections, that he generally decides the matter with great gravity.

Succus is very loyal, and as ſoon as ever he likes any wine, he drinks the king's health with all his heart. Nothing could put rebellious thoughts into his head, unleſs he ſhould live to ſee a proclamation againſt eating of *pheaſant*'s *eggs*.

13. All the hours that are not devoted either to *repoſe* or *nouriſhment*, are looked upon by *Succus* as *waſte* or *ſpare time*. For this reaſon he lodges near a *coffee-houſe* and a *tavern*, that when he riſes in the morning he may be near the *news*, and when he parts at night, he may not have far to go to bed. In the morning you always ſee him in the ſame place in the *coffee-room*; and if he ſeems more attentively engaged than ordinary, it is becauſe ſome *criminal* is broke out of *newgate*, or ſome *lady* was robbed laſt night, but they can't tell where. When he has learnt all that he can, he goes home to ſettle the matter with the barber's boy that comes to ſhave him.

The next *waſte time* that lies upon his hands, is from dinner to ſupper; and if melancholy thoughts

thoughts ever come into his head, it is at this time, when he is often left to himſelf for an hour or more, and that after the greateſt pleaſure he knows is juſt over. He is afraid to ſleep, becauſe he has heard it is not healthful at that time; ſo that he is forced to refuſe ſo welcome a gueſt.

But here he is ſoon relieved by a ſettled method of playing at cards, till it is time to think of ſome little, nice matter for ſupper.

After this *Succus* takes his glaſs, talks of the excellency of the *Engliſh conſtitution*, and praiſes that *miniſter* the moſt, who keeps the beſt table.

On a *Sunday* night you may ſometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of *town rakes*; and the bittereſt thing that he ſays againſt them is this, that he verily believes, ſome of them are ſo abandoned, as not to have a *regular meal*, or a *ſound night*'s ſleep, in a week.

At eleven *Succus* bids all good night, and parts in great friendſhip. He is preſently in bed, and ſleeps till it is time to go to the *coffee-houſe* next morning.

If you was to live with *Succus* for a twelvemonth, this is all that you would ſee in his life, except a few *curſes* and *oaths* that he uſes as occaſion offers.

And now I cannot help making this reflection:

14. That as I believe the moſt likely means in the world to inſpire a perſon with true piety, was

was to have seen the example of some eminent professors of religion: so the next thing that is likely to fill us with the same zeal, is to see the *folly*, the *baseness*, and poor satisfactions of a life destitute of religion. As the one excites us to love and admire the wisdom and greatness of religion; so the other may make us fearful of living without it.

For who can help blessing God for the *means of grace*, and for the *hope of glory*, when he sees what variety of folly they sink into, who live without it? Who would not heartily engage in all the labours of a pious life, when he sees what *dull* sensuality, what *gross* enjoyments they are left to, who seek for happiness in other ways?

So that whether we consider the greatness of religion, or the littleness of all other things, and the meanness of all other enjoyments, there is nothing to be found in the whole nature of things for a thoughtful mind to rest upon, but a happiness in religion.

15. Consider now with yourself, how unreasonably, it is pretended that a life of strict piety must be a *dull* and *anxious* state? For, can it with any reason be said that the duties of religion render our lives heavy and melancholy, when they only deprive us of such happiness as has been here laid before you?

Must it be tedious to live in the continual exercise of charity and temperance, to act wisely and

and virtuouſly, to do good to the utmoſt of your power, to imitate the divine perfections, and prepare yourſelf for the enjoyment of God? Muſt it be dull and tireſome to improve in holineſs, to feel the comforts of conſcience in all your actions, to know that God is your friend, that all muſt work for your good; that neither life nor death, neither men nor devils can do you any harm; but that all your ſufferings and doings, are in a ſhort time to be rewarded with everlaſting glory: muſt ſuch a ſtate be *dull* and *tireſome*, for want of ſuch happineſs as *Flatus* or *Feliciana* enjoys?

Now, if this cannot be ſaid, then there is no happineſs loſt, by being ſtrictly pious; nor has the devout man any thing to envy in any other ſtate of life. For all the art and contrivances in the world, without religion, cannot make more of human life, or carry its happineſs to any greater height, than *Flatus* or *Feliciana* has done.

The fineſt *wit*, the greateſt *genius* upon earth, if not governed by religion, muſt be as *fooliſh*, and *low*, and *vain*, in his method of happineſs, as the *poor Succus*.

16. * If you was to ſee a man dully endeavouring all his life to ſatisfy his thirſt, by holding up one and the ſame *empty cup* to his mouth, you would certainly deſpiſe his ignorance.

* But,

* But, if you ſhould ſee others, of *brighter parts*, and *finer underſtandings*, ridiculing the dull ſatisfaction of *one cup*, and thinking to ſatisfy their own thirſt by variety of gilt and *golden empty cups*; would you think that theſe were ever the *wiſer*, or *happier*, or *better* employed, for their *finer parts?*

* Now, this is all the difference that you can ſee in the happineſs of this life.

The *dull* and *heavy* ſoul may be content with one *empty appearance* of happineſs, and be continually trying to hold the *ſame empty cup* to his mouth all his life. But let the *wit*, the *deep ſcholar*, the *fine genius*, the great *ſtateſman*, the polite *gentleman*, lay all their heads together, and they can only ſhew you *more* and *various*, *empty appearances* of happineſs; give them all the world into their hands, let them cut and carve as they pleaſe, they can only make a greater variety of *empty cups*.

* So that if you don't think it hard to be deprived of the pleaſures of *gluttony*, for the ſake of religion, you have no reaſon to think it hard to be reſtrained from any worldly pleaſure. For ſearch as deep, and look as far as you will, there is nothing here to be found, that is *nobler*, or *greater*, than *high eating* and *drinking*, unleſs you look for it in the wiſdom of religion.

And if all that is in the world, are only ſo many *empty cups*, what does it ſignify which you take, or how many?

17. If

17. If you would but uſe yourſelf to ſuch meditations as theſe, to reflect upon the vanity of *all orders* of life without piety, to conſider how all the ways of the world, are only ſo many different ways of error, blindneſs, and miſtake; theſe meditations would awaken your ſoul into a zealous deſire of that ſolid happineſs which is only to be found in recourſe to God.

18. To meditate upon the perfection of the divine attributes, to contemplate the glories of heaven, to conſider the joys of ſaints and angels living for ever in the brightneſs and glory of the divine preſence; theſe are the meditations of ſouls advanced in piety, and not ſuited to every capacity.

But to ſee and conſider the *emptineſs* and error of all worldly happineſs, to ſee the *groſsneſs* of *ſenſuality*, the *poorneſs* of pride, the *ſtupidity* of covetouſneſs, the *vanity* of dreſs, the *blindneſs* of our paſſions, the *uncertainty* of our lives; and the *ſhortneſs* of all worldly projects; theſe are meditations that are ſuited to all capacities. They require no depth of thought, or ſublime ſpeculation; but are forced upon us by all our ſenſes, and taught by almoſt every thing that we ſee and hear.

This is that *Wiſdom that crieth, and putteth forth her voice in the ſtreets*, Prov. viii. 1. that ſtandeth at all our doors, that appealeth to all our ſenſes, teaching us in every thing and every where, by all that we ſee, and all that we hear, by births and

and

and burials, by ſickneſs and health, by life and death, by pains and poverty, by miſery and vanity, and by all the changes of life; that there is nothing elſe for man to look after, no other end in nature for him to drive at, but a happineſs in religion.

CHAP. XI.

That not only a life of vanity, *or* ſenſuality, *but even the* moſt regular *kind of life, that is not governed by great devotion, ſufficiently ſhews its miſeries, its wants and emptineſs to the eyes of all the world. This repreſented in various characters.*

1.* *OCTAVIUS* is a learned, ingenious man, well verſed in moſt parts of literature, and no ſtranger to any kingdom in *Europe*. The other day, being juſt recovered from a lingering *fever* he took upon him to talk thus to his friends.

"My *glaſs*, ſays he, is almoſt run out; and your eyes ſee how many marks of *age* and *death* I bear about me: but I plainly feel myſelf ſinking away faſter than any ſtanders-by imagine. I fully believe, that one year more will conclude my reckoning."

The attention of his friends was much raiſed by ſuch a declaration, expecting to hear ſomething

thing truly excellent from ſo learned a man, who had but a year longer to live; when *Octavius* proceeded in this manner, "For theſe reaſons, ſays he, my friends, I have left off all *taverns*; the wine of thoſe places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature. I muſt now be *nice* in what I drink. I cant't pretend to do as I have done; and therefore I am reſolved to furniſh my own *cellar* with a little of the very beſt, tho' it coſt me ever ſo much."

2. A few days after *Octavius* had made this declaration to his friends, he relapſed into his former illneſs, was committed to *a nurſe*, who cloſed his eyes before his freſh parcel of wine came in.

Young *Eugenius* who was preſent at this diſcourſe went home a new man.

I never, ſays *Eugenius*, was ſo deeply affected with the wiſdom and importance of religion, as when I ſaw how *poorly* and *meanly* the learned *Octavius* was to leave the world, thro' the want of it.

3. * Was *all* to die with our *bodies*, there might be ſome pretence for thoſe *different ſorts* of happineſs, that are now ſo much talked of: but ſince *our all* begins at the death of our bodies; ſince all men are to be immortal, either in miſery or happineſs, in a world entirely different from this; ſince they are all haſtening thence at all uncertainties, as faſt as death can cut them down; ſome in *ſickneſs*, ſome in *health*, ſome *ſleeping*,

ſleeping, ſome *waking*, ſome at *midnight*, others at *cock-crowing*, and at all hours they know not of; is it not certain, that no man can exceed another in joy and happineſs, but ſo far as he exceeds him in thoſe virtues which fit him for a happy death?

* *Cognatus* is a ſober, regular *clergyman*, of good repute in the world, and well eſteemed in his pariſh. All his pariſhioners ſay he is an *honeſt* man, and very notable at making a *bargain*. The farmers liſten to him with great attention, when he talks of the propereſt time of ſelling corn.

He has been for twenty years a diligent obſerver of *markets*, and has raiſed a conſiderable fortune by good management.

Cognatus is very *orthodox*, and full of *eſteem* for our *Engliſh* liturgy; and if he has not prayers on *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*, 'tis becauſe his *predeceſſor* had not uſed the pariſh to any ſuch cuſtom. As he cannot ſerve both his livings himſelf; ſo he makes it matter of *conſcience* to keep a *ſober curate* upon one of them, whom he *hires* to take care of all the ſouls in the pariſh, at as *cheap* a rate as a ſober man can be procured.

Cognatus has been very proſperous all his time; but ſtill he has had the uneaſineſs and vexations that they have, who are deep in worldly buſineſs. *Taxes*, *loſſes*, *croſſes*, *bad mortgages*, *bad tenants*, and the hardneſs of the times, are

frequent

frequent fubjects of his converfation, and a good or a bad *feafon* has a great effect upon his fpirits.

Cognatus has no other end in growing rich, but that he may leave a conſiderable fortune to a *niece*, whom he has *politely* educated in expenſive finery, by what he has faved out of the tythes of *two livings*.

The neighbours look upon *Cognatus* as an happy clergyman, becauſe they ſee him (as they call it) in *good circumſtances*; and ſome of them intend to dedicate their own ſons to the church, becauſe they ſee how well it has ſucceeded with *Cognatus*, whoſe father was but an *ordinary man*.

5. * But now if *Cognatus*, when he firſt entered into holy orders, had perceived how abſurd a thing it is to grow *rich* by the goſpel; if he had propoſed to himſelf the example of ſome *primitive father*; if, inſtead of twenty years care to lay up treaſures upon earth, he had diſtributed the income of every year in the moſt Chriſtian acts of charity.

If inſtead of tempting his *niece* to be proud, and providing her with ſuch ornaments as the *apoſtle* forbids, he had cloathed, comforted, and relieved numbers of *widows* and *orphans*, who were all to appear for him at the laſt day:

* If inſtead of the cares and anxieties of *bad bonds*, *troubleſome mortgages*, and *ill bargains*, he had had the conſtant comfort of knowing, that his treaſure was ſecurely laid up, where neither moth

moth corrupteth, nor thieves break thro' and ſteal; could it with any reaſon be ſaid, that he had miſtaken the ſpirit and dignity of his order, or leſſened any of that happineſs, which is to be found in his ſacred employment?

If inſtead of rejoicing in the happineſs of a ſecond *living*, he had thought it unbecoming the office of a clergyman to traffick for gain in *holy things*, as to open a ſhop.

* If he had thought it better to recommend ſome *honeſt labour* to his *niece*, than to ſupport her in *idleneſs* by the labour of a *curate*; better that ſhe ſhould want *fine cloaths*, and a *rich huſband*, than that cures of ſouls ſhould be farmed out, and brother clergymen not ſuffered to live by thoſe altars at which they ſerve. If this had been the ſpirit of *Cognatus*, could it with any reaſon be ſaid, that theſe rules of religion, this ſtrictneſs of piety, had robbed *Cognatus* of any real happineſs? Could it be ſaid, that a life thus governed by the ſpirit of the goſpel, muſt be *dull* and *melancholy*, if compared to that of raiſing a fortune for a *niece?*

6. Look now at that condition of life which draws the envy of all.

* *Negotius* is a temperate, honeſt man. He ſerved his time under a maſter of great trade; but has, by his own management, made it a more conſiderable buſineſs than ever it was before. For thirty years laſt paſt, he has been correſponding with all parts of *Europe*. The

general good of trade ſeems to *Negotius* to be the general good of life; whatever he commends or condemns, either in church or ſtate, is commended, or condemned, with regard to trade.

As money is continually pouring in upon him; ſo he often lets it go in various kinds of expence and generoſity, and ſometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in any public contribution. If a *purſe* is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a plate for a horſe-race, or to redeem a *priſoner* out of gaol, you are always ſure of having ſomething from him.

He has given a fine *ring of bells* to a church in the country; and there is much expectation that he will ſome time or other make a more beautiful *front* to the *market-houſe*, than has yet been ſeen in any place: for it is the generous ſpirit of *Negotius*, to do nothing in a mean way.

7. If you aſk what it is that has ſecured *Negotius* from all *ſcandalous vices*, it is the ſame thing that has kept him from all *ſtrictneſs of devotion*, it is his great buſineſs. He has always had too many important things in his head; his thoughts are too much employed, to ſuffer him to fall either into a courſe of *rakery*, or to feel the neceſſity of an *inward, ſolid* piety.

For this reaſon he hears of the pleaſures of debauchery, and the pleaſures of piety with the ſame

indifferency; and has no more desire of living in the one than in the other, because neither of them consists with that turn of mind, and multiplicity of business, which are his happiness.

* If *Negotius* was asked, what it is which he drives at in life? He would be as much at a loss for an answer, as if he was asked, what any other person was thinking of. For though he always seems to himself to know what he is doing, and has many things in his head, which are the motives of his actions; yet he cannot tell you of any *one general end* of life that he has chosen with deliberation, as being truly worthy of all his labour and pains.

He has several confused notions in his head, which have been a long time there: such as these; that it is *something great* to have more business than other people, to have more dealings upon his hands than a hundred of the same profession, to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise an immense fortune before he dies. The thing that seems to give *Negotius* the greatest life and spirit, and to be most in his thoughts, is an expectation that he shall die richer than any of his business ever did.

8. The generality of people when they think of happiness, think upon *Negotius*; in whose life every instance of happiness is supposed to meet, sober, prudent, rich, prosperous, generous and charitable.

Let us now look at this condition in another, but truer light.

* Let it be ſuppoſed, that this ſame *Negotius* was a painful, laborious man, very deep in variety of affairs; that he neither drank, nor debauched, but was ſober and regular in his buſineſs. Let it be ſuppoſed, that he grew old in this courſe of trading, and that the *end* and *deſign* of all his labour, and care, and application to buſineſs, was only this, that he might die poſſeſſed of more than an hundred thouſand pair of *boots* and *ſpurs*.

Let it be ſuppoſed that the ſober part of the world ſay of him when he his dead, that he was a great and happy man, a thorough maſter of buſineſs, and had acquired an hundred thouſand pair of *boois* and *ſpurs* when he died.

9. * Now if this was really the caſe, I believe that it would be readily granted, that a life of ſuch buſineſs was as poor and ridiculous as any that can be invented. But it would puzzle any one to ſhew, that a man that has ſpent all his time and thoughts in buſineſs and hurry, that he might die, as it is ſaid, worth an hundred thouſand pounds, is any whit wiſer than he, who has taken the ſame pains to have as many pairs of *boots* and *ſpurs* when he leaves the world.

* For if the *ſtate* of our ſouls be our *whole ſtate*, if the only end of life be to die as *free* from ſin, and as *exalted* in virtue as we can; if naked as

we

we came, ſo naked are we to return, and to ſtand a trial before Chriſt and his holy angels, for everlaſting happineſs or miſery, what can it poſſibly ſignify, what a man had, or had not, in this world? What can it ſignify what you call theſe things that a man left behind him; whether you call him *his*, or any *one's* elſe; whether you *call* them *trees* or *fields*, or birds and feathers; whether you *call* them an hundred *thouſand pounds*, or an hundred thouſand pair of *boots* and *ſpurs*? I ſay *call* them; for the *things* ſignify no more to him than the *names*. . .

Now 'tis eaſy to ſee the folly of a life thus ſpent, to furniſh a man with ſuch a number of *boots* and *ſpurs*. But yet there needs no better faculty of ſeeing, no finer underſtanding, to ſee the folly of a life ſpent in making a man poſſeſſor of *ten towns* before he dies.

* For if, when he has got all his *towns*, or all his *boots*, his ſoul is to go into his *own place* amongſt ſeparate ſpirits, and his body to be laid by in a *coffin*, till the laſt trumpet calls him to judgment; where the enquiry will be, how *humbly*, how *devoutly*, how *meekly*, how *piouſly*, how *charitably*, we have *ſpoke*, *thought*, and *acted*, whilſt we were in the body? How can we ſay, that he who has wore out his life in raiſing an *hundred thouſand pounds*, has acted wiſer for himſelf, than he who has had the ſame *care* to procure an hundred thouſand of *any thing* elſe?

10. * But farther, let it now be ſuppoſed, that *Negotius*, when he firſt entered into buſineſs, happening to read the goſpel with *attention*, found he had a much greater buſineſs upon his hands, than that to which he had ſerved an apprenticeſhip: that there were things which belong to man, of much more importance than all that our eyes can ſee; ſo glorious, as to deſerve all our thoughts; ſo dangerous, as to need all our care; and ſo certain, as never to deceive the faithful labourer.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that by reading this book, he had diſcovered that his ſoul was more to him than his body: that it was better to grow in the virtues of the ſoul, than to have a large body, or a full purſe; that it was better to be fit for heaven, than to have a variety of fine houſes upon the earth; that it was better to ſecure an everlaſting happineſs, than to have plenty of things which he cannot keep; better to live in habits of humility, piety, charity, and ſelf-denial, than to die unprepared for judgment; better to be moſt like our Saviour, than to excel all the tradeſmen in the world, in buſineſs and bulk of fortune.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that *Negotius*, believing theſe things to be true, entirely devoted himſelf to God at his firſt ſetting out in the world, reſolving to purſue his *buſineſs* no farther than was conſiſtent with great devotion, humility, and ſelf-denial; and for no other ends, but to pro-

vide

vide himſelf with a ſober ſubſiſtence, and to do all the good he could, to the ſouls and bodies of his fellow creatures.

Let it therefore be ſuppoſed, that inſtead of the continual hurry of buſineſs, he was frequent in his retirements; that inſtead of reſtleſs deſires after more riches, his ſoul had been full of the love of God and heavenly affection, conſtantly watching againſt worldly tempers, and always aſpiring after divine grace; that inſtead of worldly cares and contrivances, he had been buſy in fortifying his ſoul againſt all approaches of ſin; that inſtead of coſtly ſhew, and the expenſive generoſity of a ſplendid life, he had loved and exerciſed all inſtances of humility and lowlineſs; that inſtead of great treats and full tables, his houſe had only furniſhed a ſober refreſhment to thoſe that wanted it.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that his contentment kept him free from all kinds of envy: that his piety made him thankful to God in all croſſes and diſappointments: that his charity kept him from being rich, by a continual diſtribution to all objects of compaſſion.

12. Now, had this been the Chriſtian ſpirit of *Negotius*, can any one ſay, that he had loſt the true happineſs of life, by thus conforming to the Spirit, and living up to the hope of the goſpel?

* Can it be ſaid, that a life made exemplary by ſuch virtues as theſe, which keep heaven al-

ways in our ſight, which both delight and exalt the ſoul here, and prepare it for the preſence of God hereafter, muſt be *poor* and *dull*, if compared to that of heaping up riches, which can neither ſtay with us, nor we with them?

It would be endleſs to multiply examples of this kind, to ſhew you how little is loſt, and how much is gained, by introducing a ſtrict and exact piety into every condition of human life.

I ſhall now therefore leave it to your own meditation, to carry this way of thinking farther, hoping that enough is ſaid, to convince yourſelf, that an exalted piety is ſo far from rendering any life dull and tireſome, that it is the only joy and happineſs of any condition in the world.

13. * Imagine to yourſelf ſome perſon in a *conſumption*, or any other *lingering diſtemper* that was *incurable*.

If you was to ſee ſuch a man wholly intent upon doing every thing in the ſpirit of religion, making the wiſeſt uſe of all his time, fortune, and abilities. If he was for carrying every duty of piety to its greateſt height, and ſtriving to have all the advantage that could be had in the remainder of his life: if he avoided all buſineſs, but ſuch as was neceſſary; if he was averſe to all the follies and vanities of the world, had no taſte for *finery* and *ſhew*, but ſought for all his comfort in the hopes and expectations of religion, you would

would certainly commend his prudence; you would say, that he had taken the right method to make himself as joyful and happy, as any one can be in a state of such infirmity.

* On the other hand, if you should see the same person, with *trembling* hands, short breath, *thin* jaws, and *hollow* eyes, wholly intent upon business and bargains, as long as he could speak: if you should see him pleased with *fine cloaths*, when he could scarce stand to be dressed, and laying out his money in *horses* and *dogs*, rather than purchase the prayers of the poor for his soul, which was so soon to be separated from his body, you would certainly condemn him, as a weak, silly man.

14. Now, as it is easy to see the reasonableness, the wisdom and happiness of a religious spirit in a *consumptive man*; so, if you pursue the same way of thinking, you will as easily perceive the same wisdom and happiness of a pious temper in every other state of life.

For how soon will any man that is in *health*, be in the state of him that is in a *consumption*? How soon will he want all the same comforts of religion, which every dying man wants?

* And if it be wise and happy to live piously, because we have not above a year to live, is it not being more wise, and making ourselves more happy, to live piously, because we may have more years to come? If one year of piety before

we die, is ſo deſirable, are not more years of piety much more deſirable?

15. If a man had *five fixed* years to live, he could not poſſibly think at all, without intending to make the beſt uſe of them *all*. When he ſaw his ſtay ſo ſhort in this world, he muſt needs think that this was not a world for him; and when he ſaw how near he was to another world, that was eternal, he muſt ſurely think it neceſſary to be very diligent in preparing for it.

Now as reaſonable as piety appears in ſuch a circumſtance of life, it is yet more reaſonable in every circumſtance of life, to every thinking man.

For who but a madman can recount that he has *five* years *certain* to come?

* And if it be reaſonable and neceſſary to deny our worldly tempers, and live wholly unto God, becauſe we are *certain* that we are to die at the end of *five years*; ſurely it muſt be much more reaſonable and neceſſary for us to live in the ſame ſpirit, becauſe we have no *certainty* that we ſhall live *five weeks*.

16. * Again, if we are to add *twenty* years to the *five*, which is, in all probability, more than will be added to the lives of many people, who are at man's eſtate; what a poor thing it is! How ſmall a difference is there between five, and twenty-five years?

It

It is said, that a *day* is with God as a *thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day; because, in regard to his eternity, this difference is as nothing.

* Now, as we are created to be *eternal*, to live an endless succession of ages upon ages, where *thousands*, and *millions of thousands* of years will have no proportion to our everlasting life in God; so with regard to his eternal state, which is our real state, twenty-five *years* is as poor a pittance as twenty-five *days*.

We can never make any true judgment of time as it relates to us, without considering the true state of our *duration*. If we are *temporary* beings, then a little time may justly be called a great deal in relation to us; but if we are *eternal* beings, then the difference of a few years is as nothing.

17. If we were to suppose *three* different *sorts* of rational beings, all of *different*, but *fixed* duration; one sort that lived *certainly* only a *month*, the other a *year*, and the third an *hundred years*.

If these beings were to meet together, and talk about time, they must talk in a very different language. *Half* an *hour* to those who were to live but a *month*, must be a very different thing, to what it is to those, who are to live an *hundred years*.

As therefore time is thus a different thing, with regard to the *state* of those who enjoy it;

ſo if we would know what time is with regard to ourſelves, we muſt conſider our ſtate.

Now ſince our eternal ſtate, is as certainly ours, as our preſent ſtate; ſince we are as certainly to live for ever, as we are now to live at all; it is plain, that we cannot judge of the value of any particular time, as to us, but by comparing it to that eternal duration for which we are created.

If you would know what *five years* ſignify to a being that was to live an *hundred*, you muſt compare *five* to a *hundred*, and ſee what proportion it bears to it, and then you would judge right.

* So if you would know, what *twenty* years ſignify to a ſon of *Adam*, you muſt compare it, not to a *million* of ages, but to an *eternal duration*, to which no number of millions bears any proportion; and then you will judge right, by finding it *nothing*.

18. Conſider therefore this; how would you condemn the folly of a man, that ſhould loſe his ſhare of future glory, for the ſake of being *rich*, or *great*, or *praiſed*, or delighted in *any enjoyment*, only *one poor* day before he was to die!

But if the time will come, when a number of years will ſeem leſs to every one than a day does now; what a condemnation muſt it then be, if eternal happineſs ſhould be loſt, for ſomething leſs than the enjoyment of a day!

Why

Why does a day ſeem a trifle to us now? It is becauſe we have years to ſet againſt it. It is the duration of years that makes it ſeem as nothing.

* What a *trifle* therefore muſt the years of a *man's age* appear, when they are forced to be ſet againſt *eternity*, when there ſhall be nothing but eternity to compare them with!

* And this will be the caſe of every man, as ſoon as he is out of the body; he will be forced to forget the diſtinction of days and years, and to meaſure time, not by the courſe of the ſun, but by ſetting it againſt eternity.

As the *fixed ſtars*, by reaſon of our being placed at ſuch diſtance from them, appear but as ſo many *points*; ſo when we, placed in eternity, ſhall look back upon *all time*, it will appear but as a *moment*.

* Then, a *luxury*, an *indulgence*, a *proſperity*, a *greatneſs* of *fifty* years, will ſeem to every one that looks back upon it, as the ſame *poor ſhort* enjoyment, as if he had been ſnatched away in his *firſt ſin*.

Theſe few reflections upon *time*, are only to ſhew how poorly they think, how miſerably they judge, who are leſs careful of an eternal ſtate, becauſe they *may* be at ſome *years* diſtance from it, than they would be, if they knew they were within a few *weeks of it*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Concerning that part of devotion which relates to times *and* hours *of* prayer. *Of daily* early *prayer in the morning. How we may improve our* forms *of prayer, and increaſe the* ſpirit *of devotion.*

1. HAVING in the foregoing chapters ſhewn the neceſſity of a devout ſpirit, in every part of our common life, in the diſcharge of all our buſineſs, in the uſe of all the gifts of God: I come now to conſider that part of devotion, which relates to *times* and *hours* of prayer.

* I take it for granted, that every Chriſtian, that is in health, is up *early* in the morning; for it is much more reaſonable to ſuppoſe a perſon up *early*, becauſe he is a *Chriſtian*, than becauſe he is a *labourer*, or a *tradeſman*, or a *ſervant*, or has buſineſs that wants him.

* We naturally conceive ſome abhorrence of a man that is in *bed*, when he ſhould be at his *labour*, or in his *ſhop*. We can't tell how to think any thing good of him, who is ſuch a ſlave to drowſineſs, as to neglect his buſineſs for it.

* Let

* Let this therefore teach us to conceive, how odious we muſt appear in the ſight of heaven, if we are in *bed*, ſhut up in *ſleep*, when we ſhould be praiſing God; and are ſuch ſlaves to drowſineſs, as to neglect our devotions for it.

For if he is to be blamed as a *ſlothful drone*, that rather chuſes the lazy indulgence of ſleep, than to perform his proper worldly buſineſs how much more is he to be reproached, that had rather lie folded up in a bed, than be raiſing up his heart to God in acts of praiſe and adoration.

2. Prayer is the neareſt approach to God, and the higheſt enjoyment of him, that we are capable of in this life.

It is the nobleſt exerciſe of the ſoul, the moſt exalted uſe of our beſt faculties, and the higheſt imitation of the bleſſed inhabitants of heaven.

When our hearts are full of God, ſending up holy deſires to the throne of grace, we are then in our higheſt ſtate, we are upon the utmoſt height of human greatneſs; we are not before *kings* and *princes*, but in the preſence of the *Lord* of all the world, and can be no higher till death is ſwallowed up in glory.

On the other hand, *ſleep* is the *pooreſt*, *dulleſt* refreſhment of the body; that is ſo far from being intended as an *enjoyment*, that we are forced to receive it either in a ſtate of *inſenſibility*, or in the folly of *dreams*.

* *Sleep*

* *Sleep*, is ſuch a *dull*, *ſtupid* ſtate of exiſtence, than even amongſt *mere animals*, we deſpiſe them moſt which are moſt drowſy. He therefore that chuſes to enlarge the ſlothful indolence of ſleep, rather than be early at his devotions to God; chuſes the dulleſt refreſhment of the body, before the higheſt, nobleſt enjoyment of the ſoul; he chuſes that ſtate, which is a reproach to *mere animals*, rather than that exerciſe, which is the glory of *angels*.

3. * Beſides, he that cannot deny himſelf this drowſy indulgence, but muſt paſs away good part of the morning in it, is no more prepared for prayer when he is up, than he is prepared for *faſting*, or any other *ſelf-denial*. He may, indeed, more eaſily read over a *form* of prayer, than he can perform thoſe duties; but he is no more diſpoſed for the *true ſpirit* of prayer, than he is diſpoſed for *faſting*. For ſleep, thus indulged, gives a *ſoftneſs* and *idleneſs* to all our tempers, and makes us unable to reliſh any thing, but what ſuits with an *idle ſtate* of mind, and gratifies our natural tempers, as ſleep does. So that a perſon that is a ſlave to this idleneſs, is in the ſame temper when he is up; and tho' he is not aſleep, yet he is under the effects of it: and every thing that is *idle*, *indulgent*, or *ſenſual*, pleaſes him for the ſame reaſon that ſleep pleaſes him: on the other hand, every thing that requires *care*, *trouble*, or *ſelf-denial*, is hateful to him for the ſame reaſon that he hates to riſe.

4. It

4. It is not poſſible in nature for an *epicure* to be truly devout; he muſt renounce his ſenſuality, before he can reliſh the happineſs of devotion.

Now, he that turns ſleep into an *idle indulgence*, does as much to corrupt his ſoul, to make it a ſlave to bodily appetites, as he that turns the neceſſity of eating into a courſe of indulgence.

A perſon that eats and drinks too much, does not feel ſuch effects from it as thoſe do, who live in *notorious* gluttony and intemperance; but yet his courſe of indulgence, tho' it be not *ſcandalous* in the eyes of the world, nor ſuch as *torments* his own conſcience, is a great and conſtant hindrance to his improvement in virtue: it gives him *eyes that ſee not*, and *ears that hear not*; it creates a ſenſuality in the ſoul, increaſes the power of bodily paſſions, and makes him incapable of entering into the true ſpirit of religion.

And this is the caſe of thoſe who waſte their time in ſleep; it does not *diſorder* their lives, or *wound* their conſciences, as *notorious acts* of intemperance do; but, like any other more moderate courſe of indulgence, it ſilently, and by ſmaller degrees, wears away the ſpirit of religion, and ſinks the ſoul into a ſtate of dulneſs and ſenſuality.

5. If you conſider devotion only as a *time* of ſo much prayer, you may perhaps perform it, tho' you live in this daily indulgence; but if you conſider it as a *ſtate* of the heart, that is deeply affected

affected with a ſenſe of its own miſery and infirmities, and deſires the Spirit of God more than all things in the world, you will find the ſpirit of indulgence, and the ſpirit of prayer, cannot ſubſiſt together. Self-denial, of *all kinds*, is the very life and ſoul of piety; but he that has not ſo ſmall a degree of it, as to be able to be early at his prayers. can have no reaſon to think that he has taken up his croſs, and is following Chriſt.

* What conqueſt has he got over himſelf? What right-hand has he cut off? What trials is he prepared for? What ſacrifice is he ready to offer to God, who cannot be ſo cruel to himſelf, as to riſe to prayer at ſuch a time, as the drudging part of the world are content to riſe to their labour?

6. * Some people will not ſcruple to tell you, that they indulge themſelves in ſleep, becauſe they have nothing to do: and that if they had either *buſineſs* or *pleaſure* to riſe to, they would not loſe ſo much of their time in ſleep. But ſuch people muſt be told, that they miſtake the matter; that they have a great deal of buſineſs to do; they have a *hardened heart* to change; they have the *whole ſpirit* of religion to get. For ſurely, he that thinks devotion to be of leſs moment than buſineſs or pleaſure; or that he has nothing to do, becauſe nothing but his prayers want him, may be juſtly ſaid to have the whole ſpirit of religion to ſeek.

You

You must not therefore consider how small a crime it is to *rise late*; but you must consider how great a misery it is to want the *spirit* of religion; to have a heart not rightly affected with prayer, and to live in such softness and idleness, as makes you incapable of the most fundamental duties of a Christian life.

When you read the scriptures, you see a religion that is all *life*, and *spirit*, and *joy* in God; that supposes our souls risen from earthly desires and bodily indulgences, to prepare for another body, another world, and other enjoyments. You see Christians represented as temples of the Holy Ghost, as children of the day, as candidates for an eternal crown, as watchful virgins, that have their lamps always burning in expectation of the bridegroom. But can he be thought to have this joy in God, this care of eternity, this watchful spirit, who has not zeal enough to rise to his prayers?

7. If I was to desire you not to study the gratification of your *palate*, in the niceties of meats and drinks, I would not insist upon the crime of wasting your money in such a way, tho' it be a great one; but I would desire you to renounce such a way of life, because it supports you in such a state of sensuality and indulgence, as renders you incapable of relishing the most essential doctrines of religion.

For the same reason, I don't insist much upon the crime of wasting your time in sleep, tho' it be

a great

a great one ; but I desire you to renounce this indulgence, because it gives a softness and idleness to your soul, and is so contrary to that *lively, zealous, watchful, self-denying* spirit, which was not only the Spirit of Christ and his apostles, and the spirit of all the saints and martyrs which have ever been among men, but must be the spirit of those who would not sink in the common corruption of the world.

* Here therefore we must fix our charge against this practice ; we must blame it not as having this or that particular evil, but as a *general habit*, that extends itself thro' our whole spirit, and supports a state of mind that is wholly wrong.

It is contrary to piety ; not as accidental slips and mistakes in life are contrary to it, but in such a manner, as an ill habit of body is contrary to health.

On the other hand, if you was to rise early every morning, as an instance of self-denial, as a method of renouncing indulgence, as a means of redeeming your time, and fitting your spirit for prayer, you would find mighty advantages from it. This method, tho' it seems such a small circumstance, would in all probability be a means of great piety. It would keep it constantly in your head, that softness and idleness were to be avoided ; that self-denial was a part of Christianity. It would teach you to exercise power over yourself, and make you able to renounce other pleasures and tempers that war against the soul.

But

But above all, what is ſo planted and watered, will certainly have an increaſe from God. You will then ſpeak from your heart, your ſoul will be awake, your prayers will refreſh you like meat and drink, you will feel what you ſay, and begin to know what ſaints and holy men have meant by fervour in devotion.

8. Hoping therefore that you are now convinced of the neceſſity of riſing early to your prayers, I ſhall proceed to lay before you a method of daily prayer.

I don't take upon me to preſcribe to you the uſe of any *particular forms* of prayer, but you will here find ſome helps, how to furniſh yourſelf with ſuch as may be uſeful. And if your heart is ready to pray in its own language, I preſs no neceſſity of borrowed forms.

For tho' I think a form of prayer very *neceſſary* to *public* worſhip, yet if any one can find a better way of raiſing his heart unto God in private, I have nothing to object againſt it; my deſign being only to aſſiſt and direct ſuch as ſtand in need of this aſſiſtance.

It ſeems right for ſuch an one to begin with a *form* of prayer; and if, in the midſt of it he finds his heart ready to break forth into other words, he may leave his *form*, and follow thoſe fervours of his heart, till it again want the aſſiſtance of his uſual petitions.

* This ſeems to be the *true liberty* of *private* devotion: it may be under the direction of ſome *form*;

form; yet not so tied down to it, but that it may be free to take such new expressions as its present fervours furnish it with, which sometimes carry the soul more powerfully to God, than any expressions that were ever used before.

9. Most people are changeable in regard to devotion. Sometimes our hearts have such *strong* apprehensions of the divine presence, and are so full of compunction, that we cannot speak in any language but that of *tears*.

Sometimes the light of God's countenance shines so bright, we see so far into the invisible world, we are so affected with the wonders of the goodness of God, that our hearts worship in a language higher than that of words, and we feel transports of devotion, which only can be felt.

On the other hand, sometimes we are so sunk into our bodies, so *dull* and *unaffected* with that which concerns our souls, that we cannot keep pace with our *forms* of confession, or feel half of that in our hearts, which we have in our mouths; we thank and praise God with forms of words, but our hearts have little or no share in them.

We may provide against this *inconstancy* of our hearts, by having at hand such *forms* of prayer, as may best suit us when our hearts are in their *best* state, and also be most likely to stir them up, when they are *sunk* into *dulness*.

10. The

10. The first thing you are to do, when you are upon your knees, is, with a short *silence*, let your soul place itself in the presence of God; use this, or some other method, to separate yourself from all common thoughts, and make your heart as sensible as you can of the divine presence.

Now, if this recollection of spirit is necessary, as who can say it is not? How poorly must they perform their devotions, who are always in a *hurry*; who begin them in haste, and hardly allow themselves time to repeat their very *form*, with attention? Theirs is properly *saying* prayers, instead of *praying*.

If you was to use yourself, as far as you can, to pray always in the same place; if you was to reserve that place for devotion, and not allow yourself to do any thing common in it; if you was never to be there yourself, but in times of devotion; if any *little room*, or, if that cannot be, if any particular *part* of a room was thus used, this kind of consecration of it, as a place *holy* unto God, would much assist your devotion.

11. It may be of use to you to observe this farther rule: when at any time, either in reading the *scripture*, or any book of *piety*, you meet with a passage, that more than ordinarily affects your mind, turn it into the *form* of a petition, and give it a place in your prayers.

At

At all the *ſtated hours* of prayer, it may be of benefit to you, to have ſomething *fixed*, and ſomething at *liberty*, in your devotions.

You may have ſome *fixed* ſubject to be the chief matter of your prayer at that particular time; and yet have liberty to add ſuch *other petitions*, as your condition may then require.

For inſtance; as the *morning* is to you the beginning of a new life; as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourſelf, and a freſh entrance into the world, it is highly proper that your *firſt* devotions ſhould be *praiſe* and thankſgiving to God, as for a new creation; and that you ſhould devote *body* and *ſoul*, all you *are*, and all you *have*, to his ſervice and glory.

Receive therefore every day, as a *reſurrection* from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every *riſing ſun* with ſuch ſentiments of God's goodneſs, as if you had ſeen it, and all things, *new created* upon your account; and under the ſenſe of ſo great a bleſſing, let your heart praiſe and magnify ſo good and glorious a Creator

Therefore *praiſe* and *thankſgiving*, and *oblation* of yourſelf to God, may be the *fixed* ſubject of your *firſt* prayers in the morning; and then take the liberty of adding ſuch other devotions, as the *accidental* difference of your ſtate, or the accidental difference of your heart, ſhall direct.

12. * One of the greateſt benefits of *private* devotion, conſiſts in adapting our prayers to the difference

difference of our *ſtate*, and the difference of our *hearts*.

* By the difference of our *ſtate*, is meant the difference of our *external ſtate*, as of *ſickneſs*, *health*, *pains*, *loſſes*, *diſappointments*, *troubles*, particular *mercies* or *judgments* from God, and all ſorts of *kindneſſes*, *injuries*, or *reproaches* from other people.

Now, as theſe are great parts of our ſtate of life, as they make great difference in it, by continually changing; ſo our devotion will be made doubly beneficial to us, when it watches to receive and ſanctify all theſe *changes* of our ſtate, and turns them all into ſo many occaſions of a more particular application to God, of ſuch thankſgivings, ſuch reſignation, ſuch petitions, as our preſent ſtate more eſpecially requires.

* And he that makes every change in his ſtate, a reaſon of preſenting unto God ſome particular petitions ſuitable to that change, will ſoon find, that he has taken an excellent means, not only of *praying* with fervour, but of *living* as he prays.

13. * We are likewiſe always to adapt ſome part of our prayers to the *difference* of our *hearts*; by which is meant the different tempers of our hearts, as of *love*, *joy*, *peace*, *tranquility*, *dulneſs* and *dryneſs* of *ſpirit*, *anxiety*, *diſcontent*, *motions* of *envy* and *ambition*, *dark* and *diſconſolate thoughts*, *reſentments*, *fretfulneſs*, and *peeviſh tempers*.

If we are in the delightful calm of ſweet and eaſy paſſions, of *love* and *joy* in God, we ſhould then offer the tribute of thankſgiving.

If, on the other hand, we feel ourſelves laden with *heavy* paſſions, with *dulneſs* of ſpirit, *anxiety* and *uneaſineſs*, we muſt then look up to God in acts of humility, confeſſing our unworthineſs, opening our troubles to him, beſeeching him in his good time to leſſen our infirmities, and to deliver us from theſe paſſions.

By this wiſe application of our prayers, we ſhall get all the relief from them that is poſſible; and the very *changeableneſs* of our hearts, will prove a means of exerciſing a greater variety of holy tempers.

You will perceive by this, that perſons ought to have a great ſhare in compoſing their own devotions.

As to that part of their prayers, which is always fixed, they may uſe forms compoſed by other perſons; but in that part which they are to ſuit to the preſent *ſtate* of their *life*, and the *preſent* ſtate of their *heart*, they muſt let the ſenſe of their own condition help them to ſuch kinds of *petition*, *thankſgiving*, or *reſignation*, as their preſent ſtate requires.

14. But it is amazing to ſee how eargerly men employ their *parts*, their *ſtudy*, *application*, and *exerciſe*; how all helps are called to their aſſiſtance, when any thing is intended in worldly matters; and how little they uſe their *parts*, *ſagacity*,

gacity, and abilities, to raiſe and increaſe their devotion.

* *Mandanus* is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehenſion. He is well advanced in age, and has made a great figure in his buſineſs. Every part of *trade* that has fallen in his way, has had ſome improvement from him; and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing any thing well to its greateſt height. *Mandanus* aims at the greateſt perfection in every thing. The *ſtrength* of his mind, and his juſt way of thinking, make him intent upon removing all imperfections.

He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of *trade*, *building*, or improving *land* or *manufactures*. The clearneſs and ſtrength of his underſtanding, which he is conſtantly improving, by continual exerciſe in theſe matters, by often digeſting his thoughts in writing, and trying every thing every way, has rendered him a great maſter in moſt concerns in human life.

Thus has *Mandanus* gone on, increaſing his *knowledge* and *judgment*, as faſt as his years came upon him.

The one thing which has not fallen under his improvement, nor received any benefit from his judicious mind, is his *devotion:* this is juſt in the ſame *poor* ſtate it was, when he was only ſix years of age; and the *old man* prays now in that

little form of words which his mother uſed to hear him repeat night and morning.

This *Mandanus*, that hardly ever ſaw the pooreſt *utenſil*, or ever took the meaneſt *trifle* into his hand, without conſidering how it might be *made*, or *uſed* to better advantage, has gone all his life-long praying in the ſame manner as when he was a child; without ever conſidering how much *better* or *oftner* he might pray.

If *Mandanus* ſees a book of *devotion*, he paſſes it by, as he does a *ſpelling-book*; becauſe he remembers that he learned to *pray* ſo many years ago under his *mother*, when he learnt to *ſpell*.

Now, how poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of ſenſe, who has ſo much judgment in every thing, but that which is the *whole wiſdom* of man?

And how miſerably do many people, more or leſs, imitate this conduct?

15. * *Claſſicus* is a man of learning, and well verſed in all the beſt authors of antiquity. He has read them ſo much, that he has entered into their ſpirit, and can imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can expreſs himſelf in their language. He is ſo great a friend to this improvement of the mind, that if he lights on a young ſcholar, he never fails to adviſe him concerning his ſtudies.

Claſſicus tells his young man, he muſt not think he has done enough, when he has only learnt *languages*; but that he muſt be daily converſant

verſant with the beſt authors, read them again and again, catch their ſpirit by living with them; and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himſelf a man of *taſte* and *judgment*.

How wiſe might *Claſſicus* have been, if he had but thought as *juſtly* of *devotion*, as he does of *learning*?

He never, indeed, ſays any thing *ſhocking* or *offenſive* about *devotion*, becauſe he never *thinks* or *talks* about it. It ſuffers nothing from him, but neglect and diſregard.

The two teſtaments would not have had ſo much as a place amongſt his books, but that they are both to be had in *Greek*.

16. *Claſſicus* thinks, he ſufficiently ſhews his regard for the holy ſcripture, when he tells you, that he has no other books of piety beſides them.

It is very well, *Claſſicus*, that you prefer the bible to all other books of piety; he has no judgment, that is not thus far of your opinion.

But if you will have no other book of piety beſides the *bible*, becauſe it is the beſt, how comes it, *Claſſicus*, that you don't content yourſelf with *one* of the *beſt* books among the *Greeks* and *Romans*? How comes it that you are ſo eager after *all* of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a neceſſary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are ſo earneſt, ſo laborious, ſo expenſive of your

time and money, to reſtore *broken periods*, and *ſcraps* of the ancients?

How comes it that you tell your *young ſcholar*, he muſt not content himſelf with barely underſtanding his authors, but muſt be continually reading them *all*, as the only means of entering into their ſpirit, and forming his own judgment according to them?

Why then muſt the bible lie alone in your ſtudy? Is not the ſpirit of the ſaints, the piety of the holy followers of Jeſus Chriſt, as good and neceſſary a means of entering into the ſpirit and *taſte* of the goſpel, as the reading of the ancients is of entering into the ſpirit of antiquity?

Is your young poet to ſearch after *every line*, that may give new wings to his fancy, or direct his imagination? And is it not as reaſonable for him, who deſires to improve in the divine life, to ſearch after every ſtrain of devotion, that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his ſoul?

Do you adviſe your *orator* to tranſlate the beſt orations, to commit much of them to memory, to be frequently exerciſing his talent in this manner, that habits of thinking and ſpeaking juſtly may be formed in his mind? And is there not the ſame advantage to be made by books of devotion? Should not a man uſe them in the ſame way, that habits of devotion, and aſpiring to God in holy thoughts, may be well formed in his ſoul?

Now the reaſon why *Claſſicus* does not *think* and judge thus reaſonably of devotion, is owing

to

to his never thinking of it in any other manner, than as the repeating a *form* of *words*. It never in his life entered into his head, to think of devotion as a *ſtate of the heart*, as a *temper* that is to *grow* and *increaſe* like our *reaſon* and *judgment*, and to be formed in us by ſuch a diligent uſe of proper means, as are neceſſary to form any other wiſe habit of mind.

And it is for want of this, that he has been content all his life with the *bare letter* of prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the *ſpirit* of *Heathen poets* and *orators*.

And it is much to be lamented, that numbers of *ſcholars* are *more* or *leſs* chargeable with this exceſſive folly; ſo negligent of improving their devotion, and ſo deſirous of other poor accompliſhments, as if they thought it a nobler talent, to be able to write an *epigram* in the *turn* of *Martial*, than to *live*, and *think*, and *pray* to God, in the ſpirit of St. *Auſtin*.

And yet if you was to aſk *Mandanus* and *Claſſicus*, or any man of buſineſs or learning, whether *piety* is not the higheſt perfection of man, or *devotion* the greateſt attainment in the world, they muſt both be forced to anſwer in the affirmative, or elſe give up the truth of the goſpel.

17. Devotion is nothing elſe but *right apprehenſions* and *right affections* towards God.

All practices therefore that improve our true apprehenſions of God, all ways of life that tend to *nouriſh*, *raiſe*, and fix our affections upon him,

are to be reckoned so many helps and means of devotion.

As *prayer* is the proper fuel of this holy flame, so we must use all our care to give prayer its full power; as by *alms*, *self-denial*, frequent *retirements*, and *holy readings*, composing *forms* for ourselves, or using the *best* we can get, adding *length* of time, and observing *hours* of prayer; *changing*, *improving*, and *suiting* our devotions to the condition of our lives, and the state of our hearts.

Those who have most leisure, seem more especially called to a more eminent observance of this; and they, who by the necessity of their state, have but little time to employ thus, must make the best use of that little they have.

18. There is one thing more I would advise; and that is, to begin your prayers with a *psalm*.

I don't mean, that you should *read* over a psalm, but that you should *chant* or *sing* one.

The difference between singing and reading a psalm, will be easily understood, if you consider the difference between reading and singing a *common song* that you like. Whilst you only read it, you only *like* it; but as soon as you *sing* it, you feel the *same spirit* within you, that there seems to be in the words.

You will perhaps say, you cannot sing.

This objection might be of weight, if you was desired to sing to entertain other people; but it

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is not to be admitted in the preſent caſe, where you are only adviſed to ſing the praiſes of God in private.

Do but ſo live, that your heart may truly rejoice in God, that it may feel itſelf affected with the praiſes of God; and then you will find, that this ſtate of your heart will neither want a voice, nor ear, to find a tune for a pſalm.

19. * The union of ſoul and body, is not a mixture of their ſubſtances, as we ſee bodies united and mixed together, but conſiſts ſolely in the mutual power that they have of acting upon one another.

* If two perſons were in ſuch a ſtate of dependance upon one another, that neither of them could act, or move, or think, or feel, or ſuffer, or deſire any thing, without putting the other into the ſame condition, one might properly ſay, that they were in a ſtate of ſtrict union, altho' their ſubſtances were not united together.

* Now this is the union of the ſoul and body; the ſubſtance of the one cannot be mixed or united with the other; but they are held together in ſuch a ſtate of union, that all the actions and ſufferings of the one, are at the ſame time the actions and ſufferings of the other. The ſoul has no thought or paſſion, but the body is concerned in it; the body has no action or motion, but what, in ſome degree, affects the ſoul.

Now, as it is the ſole will of God, that is the *cauſe* of all the powers and effects which you ſee in the world; as the *ſun* gives light and heat, not becauſe it has any natural power of ſo doing; as it is fixed in a certain place, and other bodies moving about it; not becauſe it is in the nature of the ſun to ſtand ſtill, and in the nature of other bodies to move about it; but merely becauſe it is the *will* of God, that they ſhould be in ſuch a ſtate: as the *eye* is the organ, or inſtrument of ſeeing, not becauſe the *ſkins*, and *coats*, and *humours* of the eye, have a natural power of giving ſight: as the ears are the organs, or inſtruments of hearing, not becauſe the *make* of the ear has any natural power over ſounds, but merely becauſe it is the will of God, that *ſeeing* and *hearing* ſhould be thus received; ſo it is the ſole will of God, that is the cauſe of this union betwixt the ſoul and the body.

20. If you rightly apprehend this ſhort account of the union of the ſoul and body, you will ſee a great deal into the reaſon of all the outward parts of religion.

This union of our ſouls and bodies, is the reaſon both why we have ſo little and ſo much power over ourſelves. It is owing to this, that we have ſo little power over our ſouls: for as we cannot prevent the effects of external objects upon our bodies; as we cannot command out-

ward

ward cauſes; ſo we cannot always command the inward ſtate of our minds; becauſe, as outward objects act upon our bodies without our leave, ſo our bodies act upon our minds by the laws of the union vital. And thus you ſee it is owing to this union, that we have ſo *little* power over ourſelves.

On the other hand, it is owing to this union, that we have ſo *much* power over ourſelves. For as our ſouls in a great meaſure depend upon our bodies; and as we have great power over theſe; as we can mortify our bodies, and remove ourſelves from objects that inflame our paſſions; ſo we have a great power over the *inward* ſtate of our ſouls. Again, as the outward acts of reading, praying, ſinging, and the like, have an effect upon the ſoul; ſo by being maſters of theſe outward, bodily actions, we have great power over the inward ſtate of the heart.

And thus it is owing to this union, that we have ſo much power over ourſelves.

Now from this you may ſee the benefit of ſinging pſalms, and of all the outward acts of religion; for if the body has ſo much power over the ſoul, all ſuch bodily actions as affect the ſoul, are of great weight in religion, becauſe they are proper to ſupport that *ſpirit*, which is the true worſhip of God.

21. This doctrine may be eaſily carried too far; for by calling in too many outward means

of worſhip, it may degenerate into ſuperſtition. But ſome have fallen into the contrary extreme. Becauſe religion is juſtly placed in the heart, they renounce vocal prayer, and other outward acts of worſhip, and reſolve all religion into a *quietiſm*, or *myſtic* intercourſe with God in ſilence.

But ſince we are neither *all ſoul*, nor *all body*; ſeeing none of our actions are either ſeparately of the ſoul, or ſeparately of the body; if we would truly proſtrate ourſelves before God, we muſt uſe our bodies to poſtures of lowlineſs. If we deſire true fervours of devotion, we muſt make prayer the frequent labour of our lips. If we would feel inward joy and delight in God, we muſt practiſe all the outward acts of it, and make our voices call upon our hearts.

Now therefore, you may plainly ſee the reaſon of *ſinging of pſalms*; it is becauſe outward actions are neceſſary to ſupport inward tempers.

22. I have been the longer upon this head, becauſe of its importance to true religion. For there is no ſtate of mind ſo excellent, as that of *thankfulneſs* to God; and conſequently, nothing is of more importance than that which exerciſes and improves this habit of mind.

*An *uneaſy, complaining* ſpirit, which is ſometimes the ſpirit of thoſe that ſeem careful of religion, is yet of all tempers the moſt contrary

to religion; for it disowns that God which it pretends to adore. For he sufficiently disowns God, who does not adore him as a being of infinite goodness.

* If a man does not believe that all the world is as God's family, where nothing happens by chance, but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a being that is all love and goodness to all his creatures; if a man does not believe this from his heart, he cannot be said to believe in God. And yet he that has this faith, has faith enough to be always thankful to God. For he that believes every thing happens to him for the *best*, cannot complain for the want of something that is *better*.

If therefore you live in murmurings and complaints, it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of religion, a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgement of the goodness of God towards you; so repinings and complaints are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness towards you.

* On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who *prays* most, or *fasts* most; it is not he who gives most *alms*, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is *always thankful* to God, who *wills* every thing that God *willeth*, who receives every thing as an instance

inſtance of God's goodneſs, and has a heart always ready to praiſe God for it.

All prayer and devotion, faſtings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all ſacraments and ordinances, are but ſo many means to render the ſoul thus conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulneſs and praiſe for every thing that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it, are but ſo many falſe ornaments of a ſoul not converted unto God.

23. If any one would tell you the ſhorteſt, ſureſt way to all happineſs, he muſt tell you to *thank and praiſe God for every thing that happens to you.* For whatever ſeeming calamity happens, if you thank and praiſe God for it, you turn it into a bleſſing. Could you therefore work miracles, you could not do more for yourſelf, than by this *thankful ſpirit*; for it *heals* with a word ſpeaking, and turns all that it touches into happineſs.

If therefore you would be ſo true to your intereſt, as to propoſe this *thankfulneſs* as the end of all your religion; if you would but ſettle it in your mind, that this was the ſtate that you was to aim at by all your devotions, you would then have ſomething plain and viſible to walk by, and might judge of your improvement in piety. For ſo far as you renounce all motions of

of your own will, and ſeek for no other happineſs, but in the thankful reception of every thing that happens to you, ſo far you have advanced in piety.

And altho' this be the higheſt temper that you can aim at; yet it is not tied to any *time*, or *place*, or *great* occaſion, but is always in your power, and may be the exerciſe of every day. For the *common events* of every day are ſufficient to diſcover and exerciſe this temper, and may plainly ſhew you how far you are governed in all your actions by this thankful ſpirit.

24. It may perhaps be objected, that tho' the benefit of this practice is apparent; yet it ſeems not ſo fit for *private* devotions, ſince it can hardly be performed without making our devotions public.

It is anſwered, *firſt*, that great numbers of people have it in their power to be as private as they pleaſe; ſuch perſons therefore are excluded from this excuſe.

Secondly, Numbers of people are by the *neceſſity* of their ſtate, as *ſervants*, *apprentices*, *priſoners*, and *families* in ſmall houſes, forced to be continually in the preſence of ſomebody or other.

Now are ſuch perſons to neglect their prayers, becauſe they cannot pray without being ſeen? Are they not rather obliged to be more exact in them, that others may not be witneſſes of their neglect, and ſo corrupted by their example?

And

And what is here said of devotion, may surely be said of *singing a psalm.*

The rule is this: Don't pray that you *may be seen* of men; but if your *confinement* obliges you to be always in the sight of others, be more afraid of being seen to *neglect*, than of being seen to have *recourse* to prayer.

Thirdly, Either people can use such privacy in this practice, as to have no hearers, or they cannot. If they can, then this objection vanishes as to them; and if they cannot, they should consider their *confinement*, and the *necessities* of their state, as the confinement of a *prison*; and then have an excellent *pattern* to follow: they may imitate St. *Paul* and *Silas*, who *sang praises to God in prison*, tho' we are expressly told, that the *prisoners heard them.* They did not refrain this kind of devotion, for fear of being heard by others. If therefore any one is in the same necessity, either in *prison* or out of prison, what can he do better, than to follow this example?

Fourthly, The *privacy* of our prayers is not *destroyed* by our *having*, but by our *seeking* witnesses of them.

If therefore nobody hears you but those you cannot separate yourself from, you are as much in *secret*, and *your Father who seeth in secret*, will as truly reward your secrecy, as if you was seen by him alone.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Recommending devotions at nine o'clock in the morning, called in ſcripture, the third hour *of the day. The ſubject of theſe prayers may be* humility.

I AM now come to another hour of prayer, which in ſcripture is called the *third hour* of the day; but according to our way of numbering the hours, it is called the ninth hour of the morning.

But if the practice of the ſaints in all ages, if the cuſtoms of the pious *Jews* and primitive Chriſtians be of any force with us, we have authority enough to perſuade us, to make this hour a conſtant ſeaſon of devotion.

I have in the laſt chapter laid before you the excellency of *praiſe* and *thankſgiving*, and recommended that as the ſubject of your firſt devotions in the morning.

And becauſe humility is the *life* and *ſoul* of piety, the *ground* and *ſecurity* of all holy affections, this may be the ſubject of your devotions at this *hour*.

This virtue is ſo eſſential to the *right ſtate* of our ſouls, that there is no pretending to a *reaſonable* or *pious* life without it. We may as well think

think to ſee without *eyes*, or live without *breath*, as to live in the ſpirit of religion, without the ſpirit of *humility*.

But altho' it is the *ſoul* and *eſſence* of all religious duties; yet is it, generally ſpeaking, the leaſt *underſtood*, the leaſt *regarded*, the leaſt *intended*, the leaſt *deſired*, and *ſought* after, of all other virtues.

* No people have more occaſion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than thoſe who have made *ſome advances* in a pious life. For pride can grow as well upon our *virtues* as our *vices*, and ſteal upon us on all occaſions.

Every good thought we have, every good action we do, lays us open to pride.

* It is not only the beauty of our perſons, the gifts of fortune, our natural talents, and the diſtinctions of life; but even our *devotions* and *alms*, our *faſtings* and *humiliations*, expoſe us to freſh temptations of this evil ſpirit.

And it is for this reaſon, I ſo earneſtly adviſe every *devout* perſon to the exerciſe of humility, that he may not fall a ſacrifice to his own progreſs in thoſe virtues, which are to ſave mankind from deſtruction.

As all virtue is founded in truth; ſo humility is a *true* ſenſe of our *weakneſs*, *miſery*, and *ſin*.

* The *weakneſs* of our ſtate appears from our inability to do any thing of ourſelves. In our natural ſtate we are entirely without *any power*; we

we are indeed active beings, but can only act by a power, that is every *moment* lent us from God.

We have no more power of our own to move a *hand*, or ſtir a *foot*, than to move the *ſun*, or ſtop the *clouds*.

*When we *ſpeak* a word, we feel no more power in ourſelves to do it, than we feel ourſelves able to raiſe the *dead*. For we act no more within our *own power*, or by our own ſtrength, when we *ſpeak* a word, or make a *ſound*, than the *apoſtles* acted within their own power, or by their own ſtrength, when a *word* from their mouth caſt out *devils*, and cured *diſeaſes*.

As it was ſolely the power of God that enabled them to ſpeak to *ſuch purpoſes*, ſo it is ſolely the power of God that enables us to ſpeak *at all*.

This is the dependent, helpleſs poverty of our ſtate, which is a great reaſon for humility. For ſince we neither are, nor can do any thing of ourſelves; to be proud of any thing that we are, or of any thing that we can do, and to aſcribe glory to ourſelves for theſe things, has the guilt both of *ſtealing* and *lying*. It has the guilt of ſtealing, as it gives to ourſelves thoſe things which only belong to God. It has the guilt of lying, as it is denying the truth of our ſtate, and pretending to be ſomething that we are not.

3. The miſery of our condition appears in this, that we uſe theſe *borrowed* powers of our nature,

nature, to the *torment* and *vexation* of ourſelves, and our fellow creatures.

* God has entruſted us with reaſon, and we uſe it to the diſorder and corruption of our nature. We reaſon ourſelves into all kinds of folly and miſery, and make our lives the ſport of fooliſh and extravagant paſſions: ſeeking after imaginary happineſs in all kinds, creating to ourſelves a thouſand wants, amuſing our hearts with falſe hopes and fears, uſing the world worſe than irrational animals, envying, vexing, and tormenting one another with reſtleſs paſſions, and unreaſonable contentions.

Let any man but look back upon his own life, and ſee what uſe he has made of his reaſon. What fooliſh *paſſions*, what vain *thoughts*, what needleſs *labours*, what extravagant *projects*, have taken up the greateſt part of his life: how fooliſh he has been in his *words* and *converſation*; how ſeldom he has been able to *pleaſe* himſelf, and how often he has *diſpleaſed* others; how often he has changed his counſels, hated what he loved, and loved what he hated; how often he has been enraged and tranſported at *trifles*, pleaſed and diſpleaſed with the very *ſame things*, and conſtantly changing from one vanity to another. Let a man but take this view of his own life, and he will ſee cauſe enough to confeſs, *that pride was not made for man.*

* Let him but conſider, that if the world knew all that of him, which he knows of himſelf; if they ſaw what *vanity* and *paſſions* govern his

his inſide, and what ſecret *tempers* fully and corrupt his beſt actions, he would have no more pretence to be honoured and admired for his *goodneſs* and *wiſdom*, than a *rotten* and *diſtempered* body to be loved and admired for its *health* and *comelineſs*.

4. This is ſo true, and ſo known to the hearts of almoſt all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them, than to have their hearts thus fully diſcovered to the eyes of all beholders.

And perhaps there are very few people in the world, who would not rather chuſe to die, than to have all their *ſecret* follies, the vanity of their minds, the frequency of their *vain* and diſorderly *paſſions*, their *uneaſineſs*, *hatreds*, *envies*, and *vexations*, made known unto the world.

And ſhall pride be entertained in a heart thus *conſcious* of its own *miſerable behaviour?*

* Shall a creature in ſuch a condition, that he could not ſupport himſelf under the ſhame of being known to the world in his *real ſtate*; ſhall ſuch a creature, becauſe his ſhame is only known to God, to holy angels, and his own conſcience; ſhall he, in the ſight of God and holy angels, dare to be *vain* and *proud* of himſelf?

5. If to this we add the *ſhame* and *guilt* of ſin, we ſhall find ſtill a greater reaſon for humility.

No creature that had lived in innocence, would have thereby got any pretence for pride: becauſe, as a creature, all that it *is*, or *has*, or *does*, is from God, and therefore the honour of all that belongs to it is only due to God.

But

But if a creature that is a *ſinner*, deſerving nothing but pains and puniſhments for the *ſhameful* abuſe of his powers; if ſuch a creature pretends to glory for any thing that he is, or does, he can only be ſaid to glory in his ſhame.

Now, how *monſtrous* and *ſhameful* the nature of ſin is, is ſufficiently apparent from that *great atonement* that is neceſſary to cleanſe us from the guilt of it.

Nothing leſs has been required to take away the guilt of our ſins, than the ſufferings and death of the Son of God. Had he not taken our nature upon him, our nature had been for ever ſeparated from God, and incapable of ever appearing before him.

And is there any room for *pride*, whilſt we are partakers of *ſuch a nature* as this?

* Have our ſins rendered us ſo abominable to to him that made us, that he could not ſo much as *receive* our prayers, or *admit* our repentance, till the Son of God made himſelf man, and became a ſuffering advocate for our whole race; and can we, in *this ſtate*, pretend to high thoughts of ourſelves? Shall we preſume to take delight in our *own worth*, who are not worthy ſo much as to *aſk pardon* for our ſins, without the mediation and interceſſion of the Son of God?

Thus deep is the foundation of humility laid, in theſe deplorable circumſtances of our condition; which ſhew, that it is as great an offence againſt truth for a man, to lay claim to any degrees

grees of glory, as to pretend to the honour of creating himself. If man will boast of any thing as his own, he must boast of his *misery* and *sin*; for there is nothing else but this, that is his own property.

6. Turn your eyes towards heaven, and fancy that you saw what is doing there; that you saw *cherubim* and *seraphim*, and all the glorious *inhabitants* of that place, all united in one work; not seeking *glory* from one another, not labouring their own *advancement*, not contemplating their own *perfections*, not singing their own *praises*, not valuing *themselves*, and despising *others*, but all employed in one and the same work, all happy in one and the same joy; *casting down their crowns before the throne of God, giving glory, and honour, and power to him alone.* Rev. iv. 10, 11.

Then turn your eyes to the *fallen world*, and consider how unreasonable and odious it must be, for such poor *worms*, such miserable *sinners*, to take delight in their own *fancied glories*, whilst the highest and most glorious sons of heaven seek for no other greatness and honour, but that of ascribing all honour and greatness, and glory to God alone?

* Pride is only the disorder of the *fallen world*, it has no place amongst other beings; it can only subsist where *ignorance* and *sensuality*, *lies* and *falsehood*, *lusts* and *impurity* reign.

Let a man, when he is most delighted with his

his own *figure*, contemplate our bleſſed Lord *ſtretched* out, and *nailed* upon a *croſs*: and then let him conſider how abſurd it muſt be, for a heart full of *pride* and *vanity*, to pray to God, through the ſufferings of a *crucified* Saviour?

Theſe are the reflections you are often to meditate upon, that you may walk before God in ſuch a ſpirit of humility, as becomes the *meak*, *miſerable*, and *ſinful* ſtate of all that are deſcended from fallen *Adam*.

7. But you muſt not content yourſelf with this, as if you was therefore humble, becauſe you acknowledge the reaſonableneſs of humility, and declare againſt pride.

You would not imagine yourſelf to be devout, becauſe in your judgment you approved of prayers, and often declared your mind in favour of devotion. Yet how many people imagine themſelves humble enough, for no other reaſon, but becauſe they often commend humility, and make vehement declarations againſt pride?

Cæcus is a rich man, of good birth, and very fine parts; is very full of every thing that he ſays or does, and never imagines it poſſible for ſuch a judgment as his to be miſtaken. He can bear no contradiction, and diſcovers the weakneſs of your underſtanding, as ſoon as ever you oppoſe him. *Cæcus* would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was ſo.

There

There is nothing so odious to *Cæcus* as a proud man; and the misfortune is, that in this he is so very quickſighted, that he discovers in almoſt every body, some *ſtrokes* of vanity.

On the other hand, he is exceeding fond of humble and modeſt perſons. Humility, ſays he, is ſo amiable a quality, that it forces our eſteem wherever we meet with it. There is no poſſibility of deſpiſing the *meaneſt* perſon that has it, or of eſteeming the *greateſt* man that wants it.

Cæcus no more ſuſpects himſelf to be proud, than he ſuſpects his want of ſenſe. And the reaſon of it is, becauſe he always finds himſelf ſo in love with humility, and ſo enraged at pride.

It is very true, *Cæcus*, you ſpeak *ſincerely* when you ſay you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no *hypocrite*, you ſpeak the *true* ſentiments of your mind; but then take this along with you, you only love humility, and hate pride, in *other people*. You never once in your life thought of any other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have ſeen in *other people*.

8. The caſe of *Cæcus* is a common caſe: many people live in all the inſtances of pride, and yet never ſuſpect themſelves, becauſe they diſlike proud people, and are pleaſed with humility and modeſty, wherever they find them.

All their ſpeeches in favour of humility, and all their railings againſt pride, are looked upon as effects of their own humble ſpirit.

Whereas in truth, theſe are ſo far from being

proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it.

* For the fuller of pride any one is himſelf, the more impatient will he be at the ſmalleſt inſtances of it in other people. And the leſs humility any one has in his own mind, the more will he demand it in other people.

* You muſt therefore act by a quite contrary meaſure, and reckon yourſelf only ſo far humble, as you impoſe *every inſtance* of humility upon yourſelf, and *never* call for it in other people. So far an enemy to pride, as you never *ſpare* it in yourſelf, nor ever *cenſure* it in other perſons.

The loving humility is of no benefit to you, but ſo far as all your own thoughts, words, and actions are governed by it. And the hating of pride does you no good, but ſo far as you hate to harbour any degree of it in your own heart.

Now in order to ſet out in the practice of humility, you muſt take it for granted, that you are *proud*, that you have been ſo all your life.

You ſhould believe alſo, that it is your *greateſt* weakneſs, that your heart is moſt *ſubject* to it; that it is ſo *conſtantly* ſtealing upon you, you have reaſon to ſuſpect its approaches in all your actions.

For there is no one vice that is more deeply rooted in our nature, or that receives ſuch conſtant nouriſhment from almoſt every thing that we think or do; there being hardly any thing in the world that we *want* or *uſe*, or any *action* or *duty* of life, but pride finds ſome means or other to

to take hold of it. So that at what time ſoever we begin to offer ourſelves to God, we can hardly be ſurer of any thing, than that we have a great deal of pride to repent of.

If therefore you find it diſagreeable to entertain this opinion of yourſelf, and that you cannot put yourſelf amongſt thoſe that want to be cured of pride, you may be as ſure, as if an *angel* from heaven had told you, that you have not only much, but all your humility to ſeek.

* For you can have no greater ſign of a confirmed pride, than when you think that you are humble enough. He that thinks he loves God enough, ſhews himſelf to be an entire ſtranger to that holy paſſion; ſo he that thinks he has humility enough, ſhews that he is not ſo much as a beginner in the practice of true humility.

9. Every perſon, therefore, when he firſt applies himſelf to the exerciſe of humility, muſt conſider himſelf as a *learner*, who is, to learn ſomething that is contrary to all his former tempers and habits of mind.

He has not only much to learn; but he has alſo a great deal to *unlearn*: he is to forget, and lay aſide his own ſpirit, which has been a long while fixing and forming itſelf; he muſt forget and depart from abundance of paſſions and opinions, which the *faſhion*, and *vogue*, and ſpirit of the world, have made natural to him.

He muſt lay aſide the opinions and paſſions which he has received from the world; becauſe

the vogue and fashion of the world, by which we have been carried away, as in a *torrent*, before we could pass right judgments of the value of things, is utterly contrary to *humility*.

The devil is called, in scripture, the prince of this world; because he has great power in it, because many of its rules and principles are invented by this evil spirit, to separate us from God, and prevent our return to happiness.

Now, according to the *spirit* of this world, whose corrupt air we have all breathed, there are many things that pass for *great*, and *honourable*, and *desirable*, which yet are so far from being so, that the *true greatness* and honour of our nature consists in the not desiring them.

To abound in wealth, to have fine houses and rich cloaths, to be attended with splendour and equipage, to be beautiful in our persons, to have titles of dignity, to be above our fellow creatures, to command the bows and obeisance of other people, to be looked on with admiration, to subdue all that oppose us, to set out ourselves in as much splendour as we can, to live highly and magnificently, to eat and drink, and delight ourselves in the most costly manner, these are the *great*, the *honourable*, the *desirable* things, to which the *spirit* of the world turns the eyes of all people. And many a man is afraid of not engaging in the pursuit of them, lest the world should take him for a *fool*.

10. The

10. The hiſtory of the goſpel, is chiefly the hiſtory of Chriſt's *conqueſt* over this *ſpirit* of the world. And the number of true Chriſtians, is only the number of thoſe who, following the *Spirit* of Chriſt, have lived *contrary* to the ſpirit of the world.

If any man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. Again, *Whoſoever is born of God, overcometh the world. Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.* This is the language of the whole New Teſtament. This is the *mark* of Chriſtianity; you are to be *dead*, that is, dead to the *ſpirit* and *temper* of the world, and live a new life in the *Spirit* of Jeſus Chriſt.

But notwithſtanding the plainneſs of theſe doctrines, moſt Chriſtians live and die ſlaves to the *cuſtoms* and *tempers* of the world.

How many people ſwell with *pride* and *vanity*, for ſuch things as they would not value at all, but that they are admired in the world?

Would a man take *ten years* more drudgery in buſineſs, to add *two horſes* more to his coach, but that he knows that the world admires a *coach* and *ſix?* How fearful are many people of having their houſes poorly furniſhed, or themſelves meanly cloathed, for this only reaſon, leſt the world ſhould place them amongſt *low* and *mean* people?

Many a man would drop a *reſentment*, and forgive an *affront*, but that he is afraid, if he ſhould, the world would not forgive him.

How many would practiſe Chriſtian *temperance* and ſobriety, were it not for the cenſure which the world paſſes upon ſuch a life?

Others have frequent intentions of living up to the *rules* of Chriſtian perfection; but they are frighted, by conſidering what the world would ſay of them?

11. Thus they dare not attempt to be *eminent* in the ſight of God, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world.

From this quarter ariſes the greateſt difficulty of humility, becauſe it cannot ſubſiſt in any mind, but ſo far as it is dead to the world.

You can make no *ſtand* againſt the aſſaults of pride, humility can have no place in your ſoul, 'till you ſtop the power of the world over you, and reſolve againſt a *blind obedience* to its laws.

For indeed, as great as the power of the world is, it is all built upon a *blind obedience*.

Aſk who you will, *learned* or *unlearned*, every one ſeems to know and confeſs, that the general temper and ſpirit of the world, is nothing elſe but *humour*, *folly*, and *extravagance*.

Who will not own, that the wiſdom of *philoſophy*, the piety of *religion*, was always confined to a ſmall number? And is not this expreſly owning, that the *common ſpirit* and *temper* of the world,

world, is neither according to the wisdom of *philosophy*, nor the piety of *religion?*

Therefore you should not think it a *hard saying*, that in order to be *humble*, you must withdraw your obedience from that *vulgar spirit* which gives laws to *fops* and *coquets*, and form your judgments according to the wisdom of *philosophy*, and the piety of *religion*.

* 12. Again, to lessen your regard to the opinion of the world, think how soon the world will disregard you, and have no more thought or concern about you, than about the *poorest animal* that died in a *ditch*.

* Your friends, if they can, may bury you with some distinction, and set up a monument to let posterity see that your *dust* lies under such a *stone*; and when that is done, all is done. Your place is filled up by another; the world is just in the same state it was; you are blotted out of its sight, and as much forgotten by the world as if you had never belonged to it.

* Think upon the *rich*, the *great*, and the *learned* persons, that have made great figures, and been high in the esteem of the world; many of them died in your time, and yet they are sunk, and lost, and gone, and as much disregarded by the world, as if they had been only so many *bubbles of water*.

Think again, how many poor souls see heaven lost, and lie now expecting a miserable eter-

nity, for their homage to a world, that thinks itſelf every whit as well without them, and is juſt as merry as it was when they were in it.

Is it therefore worth your while to loſe the *ſmalleſt degree* of virtue, for the ſake of pleaſing ſo *bad a maſter*, and ſo *falſe a friend* as the world is?

Is it worth your while to bow the knee to ſuch an *idol* as this, that ſo ſoon will have neither *eyes*, nor *ears*, nor a *heart* to regard you, inſtead of ſerving that great, and holy, and mighty God, that will make all his ſervants partakers of his own eternity?

Will you let the fear of a falſe world, that has no love for you, keep you from the fear of that God, who has only created you, that he may love and bleſs you to all eternity?

13. Conſider our bleſſed Lord's words, *They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.* This is the ſtate of Chriſtianity, with regard to this world. If you are not thus out of, and contrary to the world, you want the diſtinguiſhing mark of Chriſtianity; you don't belong to Chriſt, but by being out of the world as he was out of it.

We may deceive ourſelves, if we pleaſe, with ſoftening comments upon theſe words; but they are and will be underſtood in their firſt ſimplicity and plainneſs, by every one that reads them in the ſame ſpirit that our bleſſed Lord ſpoke them. And to underſtand them in any lower meaning, is to let

carnal

carnal wiſdom explain away that doctrine, by which itſelf was to be deſtroyed.

Chriſtianity has placed us out of, and above the world; and we fall from our calling, as ſoon as we fall into the tempers of the world.

Now as it was the ſpirit of the world that nailed our bleſſed Lord to the croſs; ſo every man that has the Spirit of Chriſt, that oppoſes the world as he did, will certainly be crucified by the world ſome way or other.

For Chriſtianity ſtill lives in the ſame world that Chriſt did; and theſe two will be utter enemies, till the kingdom of darkneſs is entirely at an end.

Had you lived with our Saviour as his true diſciple, you had then been hated as he was; and if you now live in his Spirit, the world will be the ſame enemy to you now, that it was to him then.

14. *If ye were of the world*, ſaith our bleſſed Lord, *the world would love its own; but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* John xv. 19.

We are apt to loſe the true meaning of theſe words, by conſidering them only as an *hiſtorical deſcription* of ſomething that was the ſtate of our Saviour and his diſciples at that time. But this is reading the ſcripture as a *dead letter*: for they as exactly deſcribe the ſtate of true Chriſtians at this, and all other times, to the end of the world.

For as *true Chriſtianity* is nothing elſe but the Spirit of Chriſt; ſo whether that Spirit appear in the perſon of Chriſt himſelf, or his apoſtles, or followers in any age, it is the ſame thing; whoever hath his Spirit, will be hated, deſpiſed, and condemned by the world, as he was.

For the world will always love its own, and none but its own: this is as certain and unchangeable, as the contrariety betwixt *light* and *darkneſs*.

15. You will perhaps ſay, that the world is now become Chriſtian, at leaſt that part of it where we live; and therefore the world is not now to be conſidered in that ſtate of oppoſition to Chriſtianity, as when it was *Heathen*.

* It is granted, the world now profeſſeth Chriſtianity. But will any one ſay, that this Chriſtian world is of the Spirit of Chriſt? Are its general tempers the tempers of Chriſt? Are the paſſions of ſenſuality, ſelf-love, pride, covetouſneſs, ambition, and vain-glory, leſs contrary to the ſpirit of the goſpel, now they are among Chriſtians, than when they were among Heathens? Or, will you ſay, that the tempers and paſſions of the Heathen world are loſt and gone?

16. And indeed the world, by profeſſing Chriſtianity, is ſo far from being a leſs dangerous enemy than it was before, that it has by its favours deſtroyed more Chriſtians, than ever it did by the moſt violent perſecution.

We

We muſt therefore be ſo far from conſidering the world as in a ſtate of leſs enmity and oppoſition to Chriſtianity, than it was in the firſt times of the goſpel, that we muſt guard againſt it as a more dangerous enemy now, than it was in thoſe times.

It is a greater enemy, becauſe it has greater power over Chriſtians by its favours, riches, honours, rewards, and protections, than it had by the fire and fury of its perſecutions.

It is a more dangerous enemy, by having loſt its appearance of enmity. Its outward profeſſion of Chriſtianity makes it no longer conſidered as an enemy; and therefore the generality of people are eaſily perſuaded to reſign themſelves up to be governed and directed by it.

How many conſciences are kept at quiet, upon no other foundation, but becauſe they ſin under the authority of the Chriſtian world?

How many directions of the goſpel lye by unregarded? And how unconcernedly do particular perſons read them, for no other reaſon, but becauſe they ſeem unregarded by the Chriſtian world?

How many compliances do people make to the Chriſtian world, without any heſitation, or remorſe; which, if they had been required of them only by Heathens, would have been refuſed, as contrary to the holineſs of Chriſtianity?

Who could be content with ſeeing how contrary his life is to the *goſpel*, but becauſe he ſees that he lives as the Chriſtian world doth?

17. There is nothing therefore, that a Chriſtian ought more conſtantly to guard againſt, than the authority of the *Chriſtian world.*

And all the paſſages of ſcripture, which repreſent the world as contrary to Chriſtianity, which require our ſeparation from it, as from a monſter of iniquity, are to be taken in the *ſtrict ſenſe*, in relation to the preſent world.

For the change that the world has undergone, has only altered its methods, but not leſſened its power of deſtroying religion.

Whilſt *pride*, *ſenſuality*, *covetouſneſs*, and *ambition*, had only the authority of the *Heathen world*, Chriſtians were thereby made more intent upon the contrary virtues. But when pride, ſenſuality, covetouſneſs and ambition, have the authority of the Chriſtian world, then private Chriſtians are in the utmoſt danger, not only of being ſhamed out of the practice, but of loſing the very notion of the piety of the goſpel.

There is therefore hardly any poſſibility of ſaving yourſelf from the preſent world, but by conſidering it as the ſame *enemy* to all true holineſs, as it is repreſented in the ſcriptures; and by aſſuring yourſelf, that it is as dangerous to conform to its *tempers* and *paſſions*, now it is Chriſtian, as when it was Heathen.

Need

Need a man do more to make his ſoul unfit for the mercy of God, than by being *greedy* and *ambitious* of honour? Yet how can you renounce this temper, without renouncing the ſpirit and temper of the world, in which you now live?

How can a man be made more incapable of the Spirit of Chriſt, than by a *wrong value* for money; and yet how can he be more wrong in his value of it, than by following the authority of the Chriſtian world?

* Nay, in every *order* and *ſtation* of life, whether of *learning* or *buſineſs*, either in church or ſtate, you cannot act up to the ſpirit of religion, without renouncing the moſt *general temper* and *behaviour* of thoſe, who are of the ſame order and buſineſs as yourſelf.

* And though *human prudence* ſeems to talk mighty wiſely about the neceſſity of avoiding *particularities*, yet he that dares not be ſo *weak* as to be particular, will be obliged to avoid the moſt ſubſtantial duties of Chriſtian piety.

Theſe reflections, will, I hope, help you to break through thoſe difficulties, and reſiſt thoſe temptations, which the authority and faſhion of the world hath raiſed againſt the practice of *Chriſtian humility*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Shewing how the education *which men generally receive, makes the doctrines of humility difficult to be practised. The spirit of a better education represented in the character of* Paternus.

1. ANOTHER difficulty in the practice of humility, arises from our education. We are corruptly educated, and then committed to take our course in a corrupt world; so that it is no wonder, if examples of great piety are so seldom seen.

Great part of the world are undone, by being born and bred in families that have no religion.

But this is not the thing I now mean; the education that I here intend, is such as children generally receive from virtuous *parents*, and learned *tutors* and governors.

* Had we continued perfect, as God created the first man, perhaps the perfection of our nature had been a sufficient *self-instruction* for every one. But as *sickness* and *diseases* have created the necessity of *medicines* and *physicians*, so the disorder of our rational nature has introduced the necessity of *education* and *tutors*.

* And as the only end of the physician is, to restore nature to its own state; so the only end of

of education is, to reſtore our rational nature to its proper ſtate. Education therefore is to be conſidered as *reaſon* borrowed at *ſecond hand*, which is, as far as it can, to ſupply the loſs of *original* perfection. And as phyſic may juſtly be called the *art* of reſtoring health, ſo education ſhould be conſidered in no other light, than as the art of recovering to man the uſe of his reaſon.

2. Now as the inſtruction of every *art* or *ſcience* is founded upon the *wiſdom*, *experience*, and *maxims* of the ſeveral great men that have laboured in it; ſo that *right uſe* of our reaſon, which young people ſhould be called to by their education, is nothing but the *beſt experience*, and *fineſt reaſonings* of men, that have devoted themſelves to the improvement of human nature.

All therefore that *great ſaints* and *dying* men, when the fulleſt light and conviction, and after the higheſt improvement of their reaſon, have ſaid of the neceſſity of *piety*, of the excellency of *virtue*, of the emptineſs of *riches*, of the vanity of the *world*; all the *ſentences*, *judgments*, *reaſonings* and *maxims* of the wiſeſt philoſophers, when in their higheſt ſtate of wiſdom, ſhould conſtitute the *common leſſons* of inſtruction for youthful minds.

This is the only way to make the *young* and *ignorant* part of the world the better for the *wiſdom* and *knowledge* of the wiſe and ancient.

3. * The

3. * The youths that attended upon *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Epictetus*, were thus educated. Their every day leſſons and inſtructions were ſo many lectures upon the nature of man, his true *end*, and the right uſe of his faculties; upon the immortality of the ſoul, its relation to God, the beauty of virtue, and its agreeableneſs to the divine nature; upon the neceſſity of temperance, fortitude, and generoſity, and the ſhame and folly of indulging our paſſions.

* Now as Chriſtianity has, as it were, new-created the *moral* and *religious* world, and ſet every thing that is reaſonable, wiſe, holy and deſirable, in its true point of light: ſo one would expect, that the education of youth ſhould be as much bettered and amended by Chriſtianity, as the *doctrines* of religion are amended by it.

* As it has introduced a *new* ſtate of things, and ſo fully informed us of the *nature* of man, and the *end* of his creation; as it has fixed all our *goods* and *evils*, taught us the means of purifying our ſouls, pleaſing God, and becoming eternally happy; one might naturally ſuppoſe, that every Chriſtian country abounded with *ſchools*, not only for teaching a few queſtions and anſwers of a *catechiſm*, but for the forming, training and practiſing youths in ſuch a courſe of life, as the *higheſt* precepts, the *ſtricteſt* rules, and the *ſubliméſt* doctrines of Chriſtianity require.

4. * An

4. * An education under *Pythagoras*, or *Socrates*, had no other end, but to teach youth to *think, judge*, and *act* as *Pythagoras* and *Socrates* uſed.

And is it not as reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that a Chriſtian education ſhould have no other end, but to teach youth how to think, and judge, and act according to the *ſtricteſt laws* of Chriſtianity?

At leaſt one would ſuppoſe, that in all Chriſtian ſchools, the teaching youth to begin their lives in the *ſpirit* of Chriſtianity, in ſuch *ſeverity* of behaviour, ſuch *abſtinence*, *ſobriety*, *humility*, and *devotion*, as Chriſtianity requires, ſhould not only be *more*, but an *hundred times* more regarded, than any, or all things elſe.

For our educators ſhould imitate our *guardian angels*, ſuggeſt nothing to our minds but what is *wiſe* and *holy*; help us to diſcover and ſubdue every *vain paſſion* of our hearts, and every *falſe judgment* of our minds.

And it is as reaſonable to expect and require all this benefit of a Chriſtian edueation, as to require that phyſic ſhould ſtrengthen all that is right in our nature, and remove that which is *ſickly* and *diſeaſed*.

5. But alas, our modern education is not of this kind.

* The *firſt temper* that we try to awaken in children, is *pride*; as dangerous a paſſion as that of *luſt*. We ſtir them up to vain thoughts of

of themſelves, and do every thing we can, to puff up their minds with a ſenſe of their own abilities.

* Whatever way of life we intend them for, we apply to the *fire* and *vanity* of their minds, and exhort them to every thing from corrupt motives: we ſtir them up to action from principles of *ſtrife* and *ambition*, from *glory*, *envy*, and a deſire of diſtinction, that they may excel others, and ſhine in the eyes of the world.

And when we have taught them to ſcorn to be outdone by any, to bear no *rival*, to thirſt after *every inſtance* of applauſe, to be content with nothing but the higheſt diſtinctions; then we begin to take comfort in them, and promiſe the world ſome mighty things from youths of ſuch a glorious ſpirit.

If children are intended for *holy orders*, we ſet before them ſome eminent *orator*, whoſe *fine* preaching has made him the *admiration* of the age, and carried him through all the *dignities* and *preferments* of the church.

We encourage them to have theſe *honours* in their eye, and to expect the reward of their ſtudies from them.

If the youth is intended for a *trade*, we bid him look at the rich men in the *ſame trade*, and conſider how many now are carried in their *ſtately coaches*, who began in the ſame low degree as he now does. We awaken his ambition, and endeavour to give his mind a *right turn*,

by

by often telling him how rich such and such a tradesman died.

If he is to be a lawyer, then we set great *counsellors*, *lords*, *judges*, and *chancellors*, before his eyes. We tell him what great fees, and great *applause* attend fine pleading. We exhort him to take fire at these things to raise a spirit of emulation in himself, and to be content with nothing less than the highest honours of the *long robe*.

6. That this is the nature of our *best education*, is too plain to need any proof; and I believe there are few parents, but would be glad to see these instructions daily given to their children.

And after all this, we complain of the effects of pride; we wonder to see *grown men* acted and governed by *ambition*, *envy*, *scorn*, and a desire of glory; not considering that they were all the time of their youth called upon to form all their action and industry upon the same principles.

You teach a child to *scorn* to be outdone, to thirst for *distinction* and *applause*; and is it any wonder that he continues to act all his life in the same manner?

* Now if a youth is ever to be so far a Christian, as to govern his heart by the *doctrines* of humility, I would fain know at *what time* he is to begin it; or, if he is *ever* to begin it at all, why we train him up in tempers quite contrary to it?

How *dry* and *poor* must the doctrine of humility sound to a youth, that has been spurred up to all his industry by *ambition*, *envy*, *emulation*, and

and a desire of *glory* and *distinction?* And if he is not to act by these *principles* when he is a *man*, why do we call him to act by them in his *youth?*

Envy is acknowledged by all people to be the most *ungenerous*, *base* and *wicked* passion, that can enter into the heart of man.

And is this the temper to be instilled, nourished and established in the minds of young people?

7. I know it is said, that it is not *envy*, but *emulation*, that is intended to be awakened in the minds of young men.

* But this is vainly said. For when children are taught to bear no *rival*, and no *scorn* to be outdone by any of their age, they are plainly and directly taught to be *envious*. For it is impossible for any one to have this *scorn* to be outdone, this contention with *rivals*, without burning with *envy* against all those that seem to excel him, or get any distinction from him. So that what children are taught, is *rank envy*, and only covered with a name of a less odious sound.

* *Secondly*, If *envy* is thus confessedly bad, and it be only *emulation* that is endeavoured to be awakened in children, surely there ought to be *great* care taken, that children may know the one from the other; that they may abominate one as a great *crime*, whilst they give the other admission into their minds.

But

But if this were to be attempted, the *fineneſs* of the diſtinction betwixt envy and emulation, would ſhew that it was eaſier to divide them in words, than to ſeparate them in action.

For *emulation*, when it is defined in its beſt manner, is nothing elſe but a *reſinement* upon envy, or rather the moſt *plauſible part* of that black and venomous paſſion.

And though it is eaſy to ſeparate them in the *notion*, yet the moſt *acute philoſopher*, that underſtands the art of diſtinguiſhing ever ſo well, if he gives himſelf up to *emulation*, will certainly find himſelf *deep* in *envy*.

8. It is ſaid alſo, that ambition, and a deſire of glory, are neceſſary to excite young people to induſtry; and that if we were to preſs upon them the doctrines of humility, we ſhould deject the minds, and ſink them into *dullneſs* and *idleneſs*.

But theſe people who ſay this, don't conſider, that this reaſon, if it has any ſtrength, is full as ſtrong againſt preſſing the doctrines of humility upon *grown men*, leſt we ſhould deject their minds, and ſink them into dullneſs and idleneſs.

This reaſon therefore that is given, why children ſhould not be trained up in the principles of true humility, is as good a reaſon why the ſame humility ſhould never be required of grown men.

Again,

Again, let thoſe people, who think that children would be ſpoiled, if they were not thus educated, conſider this.

* Could they think, that if any children had been educated by our bleſſed Lord, or his holy apoſtles, their minds would have been ſunk into dullneſs and idleneſs?

* Or could they think, that ſuch children would not have been trained up in the profoundeſt principles of humility? Can they ſay that our bleſſed Lord, who was the humbleſt man that ever was on earth, was hindered by his humility from being the greateſt example of worthy and glorious actions, that ever were done by man?

Can they ſay that his apoſtles, who lived in the humble ſpirit of their Maſter, did therefore ceaſe to be laborious and active inſtruments of doing good to all the world?

A few ſuch reflections as theſe, are ſufficient to expoſe all the poor pretences for an education in pride and ambition.

9. * *Paternus* lived about *two hundred* years ago; he had but one ſon, whom he educated himſelf in his own houſe. As they were ſitting together in the garden, when the child was *ten years* old, *Paternus* thus began to him.

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have ſpent wholly with me: and my love and tenderneſs to you, has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cauſe of all the comfort and

pleaſure

pleaſure you enjoy: your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief, if you thought this was the laſt day that I ſhould live with you.

But, my child, tho' you now think yourſelf mighty happy, becauſe you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands, and under the tender care of a much greater father and friend than I am, whoſe love to you is far greater than mine, and from whom you receive ſuch bleſſings as no mortal can give.

That God whom you have ſeen me daily worſhip; whom I daily call upon to bleſs both you and me, and all mankind; whoſe wondrous acts are recorded in thoſe ſcriptures which you conſtantly read. That God who created the heavens and the earth; who brought a flood upon the old world; who ſaved *Noah* in the ark; who was the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; whom *Job* bleſſed and praiſed in the greateſt afflictions; who delivered the *Iſraelites* out of the hands of the *Egyptians*; who was the protector of righteous *Joſeph*, *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, and holy *Daniel*; who ſent ſo many prophets into the world; who ſent his Son Jeſus Chriſt to redeem mankind. This God, who has done all theſe great things; who has created ſo many millions of men; who lived and died before you was born, with whom the ſpirits of good men that are departed this life, now live; whom infinite numbers of angels now worſhip in heaven. This great God, who is the Creator of worlds, of angels,

gels, and men, is your loving Father and Friend, your good Creator and Nouriſher, from whom, and not from me, you received your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little, tender *elm* which you there ſee.

10. I myſelf am not half the age of this *ſhady oak*, under which we ſit; many of our fathers have ſat under its boughs; we have all of us called it ours in our turn, though it ſtands, and drops its *maſters*, as it drops its *leaves*.

You ſee, my ſon, this wide and large *firmament* over our heads, where the *ſun* and *moon*, and all the *ſtars* appear in their turns. If you was to be carried up to any of theſe bodies at this vaſt diſtance from us, you would ſtill diſcover others as much above you, as the *ſtars* that you ſee here are above the *earth*. Were you to go up or down, *eaſt* or *weſt*, *north* or *ſouth*, you would find the ſame height without any *top*, and the ſame depth without any *bottom*.

And yet, my child, ſo great is God, that all theſe bodies added together, are but as a *grain* of ſand in his ſight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God, and Father of all *worlds*, and all *ſpirits*, as if he had no ſon but you, or there were no creature for him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the *hairs* of your head, watches over you ſleeping and waking, and has preſerved you from a thouſand dangers, which neither you nor I know any any thing of.

11. How

11. How poor my power is, and how little I am able to do for you, you have often ſeen. Your late *ſickneſs* has ſhewn you how little I could do for you in that ſtate; and the frequent pains of your head, are plain proofs, that I have nopower to remove them.

I can bring you *food* and *medicines*, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nouriſhment; it is God alone that can do this for you.

Therefore, my child, fear, and worſhip, and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet ſee him, but every thing you ſee, are ſo many marks of his power and preſence, and he is nearer to you than any thing that you can ſee.

Take him for your *Lord*, and *Father*, and *Friend*; look up unto him as the fountain and cauſe of all the good that you have received through my hands; and reverence me only as the *bearer* and *miniſter* of God's good things unto you; and he that bleſſed my Father before I was born, will bleſs you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and therefore you think there is no happineſs out of it.

But, my child, you belong to a greater family than mine; you are a younger member of the family of this Almighty Father of all nations, who has created infinite orders of angels, and

numberleſs generations of men, to be fellow-members of one and the ſame ſociety in heaven.

12. You do well to reverence my authority, becauſe God has given me power over you, to bring you up in his fear, and to do for you, as the holy fathers recorded in ſcripture did for their children, who are now in reſt and peace with God.

I ſhall in a ſhort time die, and leave you to God and yourſelf; and if God forgiveth my ſins, I ſhall go to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and live amongſt patriarchs and prophets, ſaints and martyrs, where I ſhall pray for you, and hope for your ſafe arrival at the ſame place.

Therefore, my child, meditate on theſe great things, and let your thoughts often leave theſe *gardens*, theſe *fields* and *farms*, to contemplate God and heaven, to conſider angels, and the ſpirits of good men living in light and glory.

As you have been uſed to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do any thing, unleſs you firſt knew my will; ſo let it now be your rule to look up to God in all your actions, to do every thing in his fear, and to abſtain from every thing that is not according to his will.

Bear him always in your mind; teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place; for there is no place where he is not.

13. God

13. God keepeth a *book* of life, wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child; and when you die, this book will be laid open before men and angels; and according as your actions are there found, you will either be received to the happineſs of thoſe holy men who have died before you, or be turned away among wicked ſpirits, that are never to ſee God any more.

Never forget this book, my ſon; for it is written, it muſt be opened, you muſt ſee it, and you muſt be tried by it. Strive therefore to fill it with your good deeds, that the hand-writing of God may not appear againſt you.

God, my child, is all *love* and *wiſdom*, and *goodneſs*; and every thing that he has made, and every action that he does, is the effect of them all. Therefore you cannot pleaſe God, but ſo far as you ſtrive to walk in love, wiſdom and goodneſs. As all wiſdom, love, and goodneſs proceeds from God; ſo nothing but love, wiſdom, and goodneſs can lead to God.

When you love that which God loves, you act with him, you join yourſelf to him; and when you love what he diſlikes, then you oppoſe him, and ſeparate yourſelf from him. This is the true and the right way; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart.

14. Firſt of all, my child, worſhip and adore God, think of him magnificently, ſpeak of him reverently, magnify his providence, adore his power, frequent his ſervice, and pray unto him conſtantly.

Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with ſuch tenderneſs and affection as you love yourſelf. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful he is to them, how tender he is of them, how carefully he preſerves them, and then ſtrive to love the world as God loves it.

God would have all men to be happy, therefore do you *will* and deſire the ſame. All men are great inſtances of divine love, therefore let all men be inſtances of your love.

But above all, my ſon, mark this: never do any thing through ſtrife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do any thing in order to excel other people, but in order to pleaſe God, and becauſe it is his will, that you ſhould do every thing in the beſt manner that you can.

For if it is once a pleaſure to you to excel other people, it will by degrees be a pleaſure to you, to ſee other people not ſo good as yourſelf.

Baniſh therefore every thought of *pride* and *diſtinction*, and accuſtom yourſelf to rejoice in all the excellencies of your fellow-creatures, and be

be as glad to ſee any of their good actions as your own.

For as God is well pleaſed with their well-doings, as with yours; ſo you ought to deſire, that every thing that is wiſe, and holy, and good, may be performed in as high a manner by other people, as by yourſelf.

15. Let this therefore be your only motive to all good actions, to do every thing in as perfect a manner as you can; for this only reaſon, becauſe it is pleaſing to God, who writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my ſon, you will be maſter of all my eſtate, which will be a great deal more than the neceſſities of one family require. Therefore, as you are to be charitable to the ſouls of men, and wiſh them the ſame happineſs with you in heaven; ſo be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth.

As God has created all things for the common good of all men; ſo let that part of them, which is fallen to your ſhare, be employed, as God would have all employed, for the common good of all.

Do good, my ſon, firſt of all to thoſe that moſt deſerve it, but remember to do good to all. The greateſt ſinners receive daily inſtances of God's goodneſs towards them; he nouriſhes and preſerves them, that they may repent, and return to him; do you therefore imitate God,

and think no one too bad to receive your relief and kindneſs, when you ſee that he wants it.

16. I am teaching you *Latin* and *Greek*, not that you ſhould deſire to be a great *critic*, a fine *poet*, or an eloquent *orator*. I would not have your heart feel any of theſe deſires; for the deſire of theſe accompliſhments is vanity, and the maſters of them are generally vain men.

But I teach you theſe languages, that at proper times you may look into the hiſtory of paſt ages, and learn the methods of God's providence over the world: that reading the writings of of the ancient ſages, you may ſee how wiſdom and virtue have been the praiſe of great men of all ages.

Let truth and plainneſs be the only ornament of your language, and ſtudy nothing but how to think of all things as they deſerve, to chuſe every thing that is beſt, to live according to reaſon, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God.

Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a ſcholar, no finer a gentleman, than theſe tempers will make you. As true religion is nothing elſe but ſimple nature governed by right reaſon; ſo it loves and requires great plainneſs and ſimplicity of life. Therefore avoid all ſuperfluous ſhews, finery, and

and equipage, and let your houſe be plainly furniſhed with moderate conveniences. Don't conſider what your eſtate can afford, but what right reaſon requires.

17. Let your *dreſs* be ſober, clean, and modeſt; not to ſet out the beauty of your perſon, but to declare the ſobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may reſemble the plainneſs of your heart. For it is highly reaſonable, that you ſhould be *one man*, all of a piece, and appear outwardly ſuch as you are inwardly.

As to your *meat* and *drink*, in them obſerve the *higheſt rules* of Chriſtian temperance and ſobriety: conſider your body only as the ſervant of your ſoul; and only ſo nouriſh it, that it may perform an humble and obedient ſervice to it.

But, my ſon, obſerve this as a principal thing, which I ſhall remember you of as long as I live.

Hate and deſpiſe all *human glory*, for it is nothing elſe but human folly. It is the greateſt *ſnare*, and the greateſt *betrayer* that you can poſſibly admit into your heart.

Let every day therefore be a day of humility; condeſcend to all the infirmities of your fellow-creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoice in their proſperities, compaſſionate their diſtreſs, receive their friendſhip, overlook their unkindneſs, forgive their malice,

be a ſervant of ſervants, and condeſcend to do the loweſt offices to the loweſt of mankind.

18. *Aſpire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition but to do every thing in ſo religious a manner, that you may be glad God is every where preſent, and ſees all your actions. The greateſt trial of humility, is an humble behaviour towards your equals in *age*, *eſtate*, and *condition*. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards theſe people. Let all your behaviour towards them be governed by unfeigned love. Have no deſire to put any of your equals below you, nor any anger at thoſe that would put themſelves above you, if they are proud, they are ill of a very bad diſtemper; let them therefore have your tender pity, and perhaps your meekneſs may prove an occaſion of their cure; but if your humility ſhould do them no good, it will however be the greateſt good to yourſelf.

Remember that there is but one man in the world, with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always ſtriving to excel him, and that is yourſelf.

The time of practiſing theſe precepts, my child, will ſoon be over with you; the world will ſoon ſlip thro' your hands, or rather you will ſoon ſlip thro' it; it ſeems but the other day ſince I received theſe inſtructions from my dear father, that I am now leaving with you.

And

And the God that gave me ears to hear, and a heart to receive what my father ſaid unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the ſame inſtructions.

CHAP. XV.

Shewing how the method of educating daughters, *makes it difficult for them to enter into the ſpirit of Chriſtian humility. How miſerably they are injured and abuſed by ſuch an education. The ſpirit of a better education, repreſented in the character of* Eufebia.

1. THAT turn of mind which is taught and encouraged in the education of *daughters*, makes it exceeding difficult for them to enter into ſuch a ſenſe and practice of humility, as the ſpirit of Chriſtianity requireth.

* The right education of this *ſex* is of the utmoſt importance. For tho' *women* don't carry on the *trade* and *buſineſs* of the world; yet as they are *mothers* and *miſtreſſes* of families, that have for ſome time the care of the education of their children, they are entruſted with that which is of the greateſt conſequence to human life. For this reaſon, *good* or *bad* women are likely to do as much good or harm in the world, as good or bad men in the greateſt buſineſs.

* For as the *health* and *ſtrength*, or *weakneſs* of our bodies, is much owing to *their methods* of treating us when we were young; ſo the *ſoundneſs* or *folly* of our minds is not leſs owing to thoſe *firſt tempers* and ways of thinking, which we eagerly received from the *love*, *tenderneſs*, *authority*, and conſtant *converſation* of our mothers.

* As we call our firſt language our *mother-tongue*, ſo we may as juſtly call our firſt tempers our *mother-tempers*; and perhaps it may be found more eaſy to forget the *language*, than to part entirely with thoſe *tempers* which we learnt in the *nurſery*.

2. It is therefore much to be lamented, that this *ſex*, who have the firſt forming both of our *bodies* and *minds*, are not only educated in *pride*, but in the *ſilliеſt* and moſt *contemptible* part of it.

* They are not indeed ſuffered to diſpute with us the proud *prizes* of *arts* and *ſciences*; but we turn them over to the ſtudy of *beauty* and *dreſs*, and the whole world conſpires to make them think of nothing elſe. *Fathers* and *mothers*, *friends* and *relations*, ſeem to have no other wiſh towards the *little girl*, but that ſhe may have a *fair ſkin*, a *fine ſhape*, *dreſs well*, and *dance* to admiration.

Now if a fondneſs for our *perſons*, a deſire of *beauty*, a love of *dreſs*, be a part of pride (as ſurely it is a moſt contemptible part of it) the firſt ſtep towards a *woman's humility*, ſeems to require a *repentance* of her education.

For

For it muſt be owned, that, generally ſpeaking, good parents are never more fond of their daughters, than when they ſee them *too fond* of themſelves, and *dreſſed* in ſuch a manner, as is a great reproach to the gravity and ſobriety of the Chriſtian life.

3. The *church* has formerly had *eminent ſaints* in that ſex; and it may reaſonably be thought, that it is purely owing to their *poor* and *vain* education, that this honour of their ſex is for the *moſt part* confined to *former* ages.

* The corruption of the world indulges them in great vanity, and mankind ſeem to conſider them in no other view, than as ſo many *painted idols*, that are to allure and gratify their paſſions; ſo that if many women are *vain, light, gewgaw* creatures, they have this to excuſe themſelves, that they are not only ſuch as their *education* has made them, but ſuch as the *generality* the world *allows* them to be.

* But then they ſhould conſider, that the *friends* to their *vanity* are no friends of theirs; that they are to live for *themſelves*; that they have as great a ſhare in the *rational nature* as men have; that they have as much *reaſon* to pretend, and as much *neceſſity* to aſpire after the *higheſt accompliſhments* of Chriſtian virtue, as the *graveſt* and *wiſeſt* among Chriſtian *philoſophers*.

* They ſhould conſider, that they are *abuſed*, and *injured*, and *betrayed* from their *only perfec-*

tion, whenever they are taught, that any thing is an *ornament* in them, that is not an ornament in the *wiſeſt* among mankind.

4. * It is generally ſaid, that *women* are naturally of *little* and *vain minds*; but this I look upon to be as *falſe*, as to ſay, that *butchers* are naturally *cruel*: for as their cruelty is not owing to their *nature*, but to their *way* of life; ſo whatever *littleneſs* and *vanity* is in the minds of women, it is like the cruelty of *butchers*, a temper that is wrought into them by that life which they are *taught* and *accuſtomed* to lead.

And if it were true, that they were thus naturally vain and light, then how much more blameable is that education, which ſeems contrived to *ſtrengthen* and *increaſe* this folly and weakneſs of their minds?

For if it were a virtue in a woman to be proud and vain of herſelf, we could hardly take better means to raiſe this paſſion in her, than thoſe that are now uſed in their education.

5. * *Matilda* is a fine woman, of good *breeding*, and great *ſenſe*. She has three daughters that are educated by herſelf. She will not truſt them with any one elſe, or at any *ſchool*, for fear they ſhould learn any thing ill. She ſtays with the *dancing-maſter* all the time he is with them, becauſe ſhe will hear every thing that is ſaid to them. She has heard them read the ſcriptures ſo often, that they can repeat great part of it without book: and there is ſcarce a

good

good book of *devotion*, but you may find it in their *clofets*.

Had *Matilda* lived in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, ſhe had in all probability been one of the greateſt ſaints. But as ſhe was born in corrupt times, where ſhe hardly ever ſaw a piety higher than her own; ſo ſhe has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

6. *Matilda* never was *meanly* dreſſed in her life; and nothing pleaſes her in *dreſs*, but that which is very *rich*, and *beautiful* to the eye.

Her daughters ſee her great zeal for religion, but then they ſee an equal earneſtneſs for all ſorts of *finery*. They ſee ſhe is not negligent of her *devotion*; but then they ſee her more careful to preſerve her *complexion*, and to prevent thoſe changes which time and age threaten her with.

They are afraid to meet her, if they have miſſed the *church*; but then they are more afraid to ſee her, if they are not *laced* as *ſtraight* as they can poſſibly be.

She often ſhews them her *own picture*, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them how *diſtracted* he was with paſſion at the *firſt ſight* of her; and that ſhe had never had ſo *fine* a *complexion*, but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it.

The children ſee ſo plainly *the temper* of their mother,

mother, that they affect to be *more pleaſed* with dreſs, than they really are.

They ſaw their eldeſt ſiſter once brought to her *tears*, and her *perverſeneſs* ſeverely reprimanded, for preſuming to ſay, that ſhe thought it was better to cover the *neck*, than to go ſo *far naked* as the modern dreſs requires.

7. She ſtints them in their *meals*, and is very ſcrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many *fine ſhapes* ſhe has ſeen ſpoiled in her time for want of ſuch care.

Whenever they begin to look *ſanguine* and *healthful*, ſhe calls in the aſſiſtance of the *doctor*; and if *phyſic*, or *iſſues*, will keep the complexion from inclining to *coarſe* or *ruddy*, ſhe thinks them well employed.

By this means they are *poor*, *pale*, *ſickly*, *infirm* creatures, *vapoured* through want of ſpirits, *crying* at the ſmalleſt accidents, *ſwooning* away at any thing that frights them, and hardly able to bear the *weight* of their beſt cloaths.

The eldeſt daughter lived as long as ſhe could under this diſcipline, and died in the twentieth year of her age.

When her body was opened, it appeared that her *ribs* had grown into her *liver*, and that her other *entrails* were much hurt, by being *cruſhed* together with her *ſtays*; which her mother had ordered to be twitched ſo ſtrait, that it has often brought tears into her eyes, whilſt the maid was dreſſing her.

Her

Her youngeſt daughter is run away with a *gameſter*, a man of great beauty, who in *dreſſing* and *dancing* has no ſuperior.

Matilda ſays, ſhe ſhould die with grief at this accident, but that her *conſcience* tells her, ſhe has contributed nothing to it herſelf. She appeals to their *cloſets*, to their books of devotion, to teſtify what care ſhe has taken to eſtabliſh her children in piety.

8. Now, tho' I don't intend to ſay, that no daughters are brought up in a *better way* than this; yet thus much may be ſaid, that the greater part of them are not brought up ſo well, or accuſtomed to ſo much religion.

Their minds are turned as much to the care of their beauty and dreſs, without having ſuch rules of devotion to ſtand againſt it. So that if *ſolid* piety is much wanted in that ſex, it is the plain conſequence of a corrupt education.

And if they are often ready to receive the firſt *fops*, *beaux*, and fine *dancers*, for their huſbands, 'tis no wonder that they ſhould like that in men, which they have been taught to admire in themſelves.

Some people will perhaps ſay, that I am exerciſing too great a ſeverity againſt the ſex.

But reaſonable perſons will obſerve, that I ſpare the *ſex*, and only arraign their *education*; that I not only ſpare them, but plead their *intereſt*, aſſert their *honour*, and only condemn that *education* which is ſo *injurious* thereto.

Their

Their education I cannot ſpare; but the only reaſon is, becauſe it is their *greateſt enemy*, becauſe it deprives the world of ſo many *bleſſings*, and the church of ſo many *ſaints*.

If it ſhould here be ſaid, that I even charge *too high* upon their *education*, and that they are not ſo *much* hurt by it, as I imagine.

It may be anſwered, that tho' I don't pretend to ſtate the *exact degree* of miſchief that is done by it, yet its plain and natural tendency to do harm, is ſufficient to juſtify the moſt *abſolute* condemnation of it.

9. But how poſſible it is to bring up daughters in a more excellent way, let the following character declare.

* *Euſebia* is a pious widow, well born, and well bred, and has a good eſtate for five daughters, whom ſhe brings up as one entruſted by God, to fit five virgins for the kingdom of heaven. Her family has the ſame regulation as a *religious houſe*, and all its orders tend to the ſupport of a conſtant regular devotion.

She loves them as her ſpiritual children, and they reverence her as their ſpiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondeſt friends.

She has divided part of her eſtate among them, that every one may be charitable out of their own ſtock, and each of them take it in their turns to provide for the *poor* and *ſick* of the pariſh.

Euſebia

Euſebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as *ſewing*, *knitting*, *ſpinning*, and all other parts of *houſewifery*; not for their *amuſement*, but that they may be ſerviceable to themſelves and others, and be ſaved from thoſe temptations which attend an idle life.

She tells them, ſhe had rather ſee them reduced to the neceſſity of maintaining themſelves by their own work, than to have riches to excuſe themſelves from labour. For tho', ſays ſhe, you may be able to aſſiſt the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to aſſiſt them more.

10. If *Euſebia* has lived as free from ſin as it is poſſible for human nature, it is becauſe ſhe is always watching and guarding againſt *all inſtances* of pride. And if her virtues are ſtronger and higher than other peoples, 'tis becauſe they are all founded in a deep *humility*.

My children, ſays ſhe, when your father died, I was much pitied by my friends, as having all the care of a family, and the management of an eſtate fallen upon me.

But my own grief was founded upon another principle: I was grieved to ſee myſelf deprived of ſo faithful a friend; and that ſuch an eminent example of Chriſtian virtues ſhould be taken from the eyes of his children, before they were of an age to love and follow it.

But as to worldly cares, which my friends thought ſo heavy upon me, they are moſt of them of our own making, and fall away as ſoon as we *know ourſelves*.

If a perſon in a *dream* is diſturbed with ſtrange appearances, his trouble is over as ſoon as he is *awake*, and ſees that it was a dream.

Now, when a right knowledge of ourſelves enters into our minds, it makes as great a change in all our thoughts and apprehenſions, as when we *awake* from the *wandrings* of a dream.

We acknowledge a man to be *mad* or *melancholy*, who fancies himſelf to be *glaſs*, and ſo is afraid of ſtirring; or taking himſelf to be *wax*, dares not let the *ſun* ſhine upon him.

But, my children, there are things in the world which paſs for *wiſdom*, *politeneſs*, *grandeur*, *happineſs*, and *fine breeding*, which ſhew as great *ignorance* of ourſelves, and might as juſtly paſs for *thorough madneſs*, as when a man fancies himſelf to be *glaſs* or *ice*.

A woman that dares not appear in the world without *fine cloaths*, that thinks it is a happineſs to have a face *finely coloured*, to have a ſkin *delicately fair*, that had rather die than be reduced to poverty, and be forced to work for a maintenance, is as ignorant of herſelf to the full, as he that fancies himſelf to be *glaſs*.

11. For this reaſon, all my diſcourſe with you, has been to acquaint you with yourſelves, and to accuſtom

accuſtom you to ſuch books, as might beſt inſtruct you in this greateſt of all knowledge.

You would think it hard, not to know the family into which you was born, what anceſtors you were deſcended from, and what eſtate was to come to you; but, my children, you may know all this with exactneſs, and yet be as ignorant of yourſelves, as he that takes himſelf to be *wax*.

For tho' you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you *pure ſpirits*. I don't mean that you have not bodies; but that *all* which deſerves to be called *you*, is nothing elſe but *ſpirit*. A being ſpiritual and rational in its nature; that is as contrary to all corporeal beings, as *life* is contrary to *death*; that is made in the image of God, to live for ever, never to ceaſe any more, but to enjoy *life*, and *reaſon*, and *knowledge*, and *happineſs* in the preſence of God, and the ſociety of angels, and glorious ſpirits, to all eternity.

Every thing that you call yours, beſides this ſpirit, is but like your *cloathing*; ſomething that is only to be uſed for awhile, and then to end, and die, and wear away, and to ſignify no more to you than the *cloathing* and *bodies* of other people.

12. But, my children, you are not only in this manner *ſpirits*, but you are *fallen* ſpirits, that began your life in a ſtate of corruption and diſorder, full of tempers and paſſions, that blind and darken

darken your reaſon, and incline you to that which is hurtful.

Your bodies are not only poor and periſhing like your cloaths, but they are like ill *infected cloaths*, that fill you with ill diſeaſes, which oppreſs the ſoul with ſickly appetites, and vain cravings.

So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us; with the one we ſee, and taſte, and admire reaſon, and holineſs; with the other we incline to pride, and vanity, and ſenſual delights.

If you would know the one thing neceſſary to all the world, it is this, to preſerve and perfect all that is *rational*, *holy*, and *divine* in our nature, and to mortify, remove, and deſtroy all *vanity*, *pride*, and *ſenſuality*.

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world, and ſee what *cuſtoms*, and *faſhions*, and *pleaſures*, and *troubles*, and *projects*, employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus?

But don't you be affected at theſe things; the world is in a great *dream*, and but few people are awake in it.

We fancy that we fall into darkneſs, when we die; but alas, we are moſt of us in the dark till then; and the eyes of our ſouls only then begin to ſee, when our bodily eyes are cloſing.

13. You ſee then your ſtate, my children; you are to improve and perfect the ſpirit that is within

within you; you are to prepare it for the kingdom of heaven, to nouriſh it with the love of God, to adorn it with good works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preſerve it from the errors and vanities of the world; to ſave it from the corruptions of the body, from thoſe falſe delights and ſenſual tempers which the body tempts it with.

You are to nouriſh your ſpirits with pious readings, and holy meditations, with watchings, faſtings, and prayers, that you may reliſh that eternal ſtate which is to begin when this life ends.

As to your bodies, you are to conſider them as *poor*, *periſhing* things, that are corrupt at preſent, and will ſoon drop into common duſt; you are to watch over them as *enemies*, that are always trying to betray you, and ſo never follow their counſel; you are to conſider them as the *place* and *habitation* of your ſouls, and ſo keep them *clean*, and *decent*; you are to conſider them as the ſervants and inſtruments of action, and ſo give them *food*, and *reſt*, and *raiment*, that they may be ſtrong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, uſeful, pious life.

Whilſt you live thus, you live like yourſelves; and whenever you have leſs regard to your ſouls, or more regard to your bodies; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your perſons, than upon perfecting your ſouls, you are much more

beſide

beſide yourſelves, than he that had rather have a *laced coat*, than an healthful body.

14. For this reaſon, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn: I have kept you from every thing that might betray you into *weakneſs* and *folly*; or make you think any thing fine, but a *fine mind*; any thing happy, but the favour of God; or any thing deſirable, but to do all the good you poſſibly can.

Inſtead of the vain, immodeſt entertainment of *plays* and *operas*, I have taught you to delight in viſiting the *ſick* and *poor*. What *muſick*, and *dancing*, and *diverſions* are to many in the world, that prayers and devotions, and pſalms are to you. Your hands have not been employed in plaiting the hair, and adorning your perſons; but in making cloaths for the naked. You have not waſted your fortunes upon yourſelves; but have added your labour to them, to do more good to other people.

Inſtead of forced *ſhapes*, *genteel airs*, and *affected motions*, I have taught you to conceal your bodies with *modeſt garments*, and let the world have nothing to view of you, but the *plainneſs*, and *ſincerity*, and *humility* of all your behaviour.

15. You know, my children, the *high perfection*, and the *great rewards* of virginity; you know how it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furniſhes means and opportunities of higher

higher advancements in the divine life. Therefore love, and eſteem, and honour virginity: bleſs God for all that glorious company of holy virgins, that from the beginning of Chriſtianity have, in the ſeveral ages of the church, renounced the cares and pleaſures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of contemplation and prayer.

But as every one has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be ſo many great bleſſings of a married ſtate; ſo I leave to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aſpire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin ſtate.

I preſs nothing upon you, but to make the moſt of human life, and to aſpire after perfection in whatever ſtate you chuſe.

Never therefore conſider yourſelves as perſons that are to be *ſeen*, *admired*, and *courted* by men; but as *poor ſinners*, that are to ſave yourſelves from the vanities and follies of a miſerable world. Learn to live for your own ſakes, and the ſervice of God; and let nothing in the world be of any value with you, but that which you can turn into a ſervice to God, and a means of your future happineſs.

16. Whether married therefore, or unmarried, conſider yourſelves as mothers and ſiſters, as friends and relations to all that want your aſſiſtance; and never allow yourſelves to be idle, whilſt

whilſt others are in want of any thing that your hands can make for them.

This uſeful, charitable, humble employment of yourſelves, is what I recommend to you with great earneſtneſs; and beſides the good you will thereby do to other people, your own heart will be improved by it.

For next to *reading*, *meditation*, and *prayer*, there is nothing that ſo ſecures our hearts from fooliſh paſſions, as ſome *uſeful*, *humble* employment of ourſelves.

Never therefore conſider your labour as an *amuſement*, that is to get rid of your time, and ſo may be as trifling as you pleaſe; but conſider it as ſomething that is to be ſerviceable to yourſelves and others, that is to ſerve ſome ſober ends of life, to ſave and redeem your time, and make it turn to your account, when the works of all people ſhall be tried by fire.

If there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can poſſibly employ yourſelves uſefully to other people, how ſilly is it, how contrary to the wiſdom of religion, to make that a *mere amuſement*, which might as eaſily be made an exerciſe of the *greateſt charity?*

What would you think of the wiſdom of him, that ſhould employ his time in diſtilling of waters, and making liquors which no body could uſe, merely to amuſe himſelf with the variety of their colour, when, with leſs labour and expence,

he

he might satisfy the wants of those who have nothing to drink?

Yet he would be as wisely employed, as those that are amusing themselves with such tedious works as they neither need, nor hardly know how to use when they are finished; when, with less labour and expence, they might be doing as much good, as he that is *cleathing* the naked, or *visiting* the sick.

Be glad therefore to know the wants of the poorest people, and let your hands be employed in making such things for them, as their necessities require. By thus making your labour a gift and service to the poor, your ordinary work will be changed into a holy service, and made as acceptable to God as your devotions.

This will make you true disciples of your meek Lord and Master, who *came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister*; and tho' he was Lord of all, and among the creatures of his own making, yet was among them *as one that serveth.*

17. Christianity has then had its effect upon your hearts, when it has removed pride from you, and made you delight in humbling yourselves beneath the lowest of all your fellow creatures.

Live therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others; not in ceremonious visits and vain acquaintances. Contract no foolish friendships, or

vain fondneſſes for particular perſons; but love them moſt, that moſt turn your love towards God, and your compaſſion towards all the world.

But above all, avoid the converſation of *fine-bred fops* and *beaux*, and hate nothing more than the idle diſcourſe, the flattery and compliments of that ſort of men; for they are the *ſhame* of their own *ſex*, and ought to be the *abhorrence* of yours.

When you go abroad, let humility, modeſty, and a decent carriage, be all the *ſtate* you take upon you; and let tenderneſs, compaſſion, and good-nature, be all the *fine breeding* you ſhew in any place.

If evil *ſpeaking*, *ſcandal*, or *backbiting*, be the converſation where you happen to be, be as much grieved as if you was amongſt curſing and ſwearing, and retire as ſoon as you can.

Tho' you intend to marry, yet let the time never come, till you find a man that has thoſe perfections which you have been labouring after yourſelves; who is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live, than to want the benefit of his example.

18. Love *poverty*, and reverence *poor people*; as for many reaſons, ſo particularly for this, becauſe our bleſſed Saviour was one of the number.

Viſit

Visit and converse with them frequently; you will often find *simplicity*, *innocence*, *patience*, *fortitude*, and great piety amongst them.

Rejoice at every opportunity of doing an humble action; whether it be, as the scripture expresses it, in *washing the saints feet*, that is, in waiting upon, and serving those that are below you, or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill manners of those that are your equals, or above you. For there is nothing better than humility; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues, and every thing that is kind and good, naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for, and practise, humility; and reject every thing in *dress*, or *carriage*, or *conversation*, that has any appearance of pride.

Strive to do every thing that is praise-worthy, but do nothing in order to be praised; nor think of any reward for your labours of love, till Christ cometh with all his holy angels.

19. And above all, my children, have a care of vain thoughts of your own virtues. For as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, the devil represents to their minds the height of their perfections; and is content they should excel in good works, provided he can make them proud of them.

Therefore watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought, as you would reject the most wicked imaginations; and

think what a loſs it would be to you, to have the fruit of all your good works devoured by the vanity of your minds.

Never therefore allow yourſelves to deſpiſe thoſe who do not follow your rules, but love them, and pray to God for them; and let humility be always *whiſpering* in your ears, that you yourſelves would fall from thoſe rules to-morrow, if God ſhould leave you to your own ſtrength and wiſdom.

When therefore you have ſpent days and weeks well, do not ſuffer your hearts to contemplate any thing as your own, but give all the glory to God, who has carried you thro' ſuch rules of holy living, as you were not able to obſerve by your own ſtrength; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficients in virtue, that can do great matters, but as *poor beginners*, that want the daily aſſiſtance of God to ſave you from the *groſſeſt ſins*.

20. Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wiſe man. Whilſt his ſickneſs would ſuffer him to talk with me, his diſcourſe was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility, he ſaw the ruins which pride made in our ſex; and therefore he conjured me with the tendereſt expreſſions, to renounce the *faſhionable ways* of educating daughters in *pride* and *ſoftneſs*, in the care of their *beauty* and *dreſs*; and to bring you all up in the *plaineſt, ſimpleſt*

pleſt inſtances of an humble, holy, and induſtrious life.

He taught me an admirable rule of humility, which he practiſed all the days of his life; which was this, to let no morning paſs, without thinking upon ſome *frailty* and *infirmity* of our own, that may put us to *confuſion*, make us *bluſh inwardly*, and entertain a mean opinion of ourſelves.

Think therefore, my children, that the ſoul of your good father, who is now with God, ſpeaks to you through my mouth; and let the double deſire of your father, who is gone, and me, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to ſtudy your own perfection, to practiſe humility, and, with innocent labour, to do all the good you can to all your fellow creatures, till God calls you to another life.

* Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters. And a very ordinary knowledge of the *ſpirit* of *Chriſtianity*, may convince us, that no education can be of true advantage to young women, but that which trains them up in *humble induſtry*, in *great plainneſs* of life, in *exact modeſty* of *dreſs*, *manners* and *carriage*, and in *ſtrict devotion*. For what ſhould a Chriſtian woman be, but a *plain*, *unaffected*, *modeſt*, *humble* creature, averſe to every thing in her *dreſs* and *carriage*, that can draw the eyes of beholders, or gratify the paſſions of lewd and amorous perſons?

21. * Theſe conſiderations may teach you to let no day paſs, without a ſerious application to God, for the *whole ſpirit* of humility: fervently beſeeching him to fill every part of your ſoul with it; to make it the ruling, conſtant habit of your mind, that you may not only feel it, but feel all your other tempers ariſing from it; that you may have no thoughts, no deſires, no deſigns, but ſuch as are the true fruits of an humble, meek, and lowly heart.

That you may always appear poor, and little, and mean in your own eyes, and fully content that others ſhould have the ſame opinion of you.

That the whole courſe of your life, your *expence*, your *houſe*, your *dreſs*, your manner of *eating*, *drinking*, *converſing*, and doing *every thing*, may be ſo many continual proofs of the humility of your heart.

That you may look for nothing, claim nothing, reſent nothing; that you may go thro' all the actions of life calmly and quietly, as in the preſence of God, looking wholly unto him, acting wholly for him; neither ſeeking applauſe, nor reſenting neglects, or affronts, but doing and receiving every thing in the meek and lowly ſpirit of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Recommending devotion at twelve o'clock, called, in ſcripture, the ſixth hour *of the day. This frequency of devotion, equally deſirable by all orders of people.* Univerſal love *is recommended to be the ſubject of prayer at this hour. Of interceſſion, as an act of univerſal love.*

1. IT will, perhaps, be thought by ſome, that theſe hours of prayer come *too thick*, and are only fit for *monaſteries*, or ſuch people as have no more to do in the world than they have.

To this it is anſwered, this method of devotion is not preſſed upon any as *abſolutely neceſſary*, but recommended to all people, as the *beſt* and the *happieſt* way of life.

And if exemplary devotion is as much the happineſs and perfection of a *merchant*, a *ſoldier*, or a man of *quality*, as it is the happineſs and perfection of the moſt *retired*, *contemplative* life, then it is as proper to recommend it without any *abatements* to one order of men as to another.

Here is therefore no excuſe for men of *buſineſs* and *figure*. *Firſt*, Becauſe it would be to excuſe them from that which is the end of living, to make them *leſs beneficial* to themſelves, and *leſs ſerviceable* to God and the world.

* *Secondly*, Becauſe moſt men of buſineſs and figure engage *too far* in worldly matters; much farther than the reaſons of human life, or the neceſſities of the world require.

* *Merchants* and *tradeſmen*, for inſtance, are generally ten times farther engaged in buſineſs than they need; which is ſo far from being a reaſonable *excuſe* for their want of time for devotion, that it is their *crime*, and muſt be cenſured as a blameable inſtance of covetouſneſs and ambition.

Gentry, and people of *figure*, either give themſelves up to *ſtate-employments*, or to the gratifications of their *paſſions*, in a life of *gaity* and *debauchery*. And if theſe things might be admitted as allowable avocations from devotion, devotion muſt be reckoned a poor circumſtance of life.

Unleſs *gentlemen* can ſhew, that they have another God, than the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; another nature, than that which is derived from *Adam*; another religion than the Chriſtian, it is in vain to plead their ſtate, and dignity, as reaſons for not preparing their ſouls for God, by a *ſtrict* and *regular* devotion.

2. If a *merchant*, having forbore too great buſineſs, that he might quietly attend on the ſervice of God, ſhould die worth *twenty*, inſtead of *fifty* thouſand pounds, could any one ſay, he had miſtaken his *calling*, or gone a *loſer* out of the world?

If

If a *gentleman* ſhould have killed *fewer foxes*, been leſs frequent at *balls*, *gaming*, and *merry meetings*, becauſe ſtated parts of his time had been given to *retirement*, to *meditation*, and *devotion*, could it be thought, that when he left the world, he would regret the loſs of thoſe hours that he had given to the improvement of his ſoul?

If a *tradeſman*, by aſpiring after Chriſtian perfection, and retiring often from buſineſs, ſhould, inſtead of leaving his children fortunes to ſpend in *luxury* and *idleneſs*, leave them to live by their own honeſt labour; could it be ſaid that he had made a *wrong uſe* of the world, becauſe he had more regard to that which is eternal, than to this which is ſo ſoon to be at an end?

Since therefore devotion is not only the beſt and moſt deſirable practice in a *cloyſter*, but in *every ſtate* of life, they that deſire to be excuſed from it, becauſe they are men of *figure*, and *eſtates*, and *buſineſs*, are no wiſer than thoſe that ſhould deſire to be excuſed from *health* and *happineſs*, becauſe they were men of *figure* and *eſtates*.

3. I can't ſee why every *gentleman*, *merchant*, or *ſoldier*, ſhould not put theſe queſtions ſeriouſly to himſelf;

What is the beſt thing for me to aim at in all my actions? How ſhall I do to make the moſt of

human life? What ways ſhall I wiſh that I had taken, when I am leaving the world?

Now, to be thus wiſe, ſeems but a *ſmall* and *neceſſary* piece of wiſdom. For how can we pretend to ſenſe and judgment, if we dare not ſeriouſly conſider, and govern our lives by that which ſuch queſtions require of us?

Shall a *nobleman* think his birth too high, to condeſcend to ſuch queſtions as theſe? Or a *tradeſman* think his buſineſs too great, to take any care about himſelf?

Now, here is deſired no more devotion in any one's life, than the anſwering theſe *few queſtions* requires.

Any devotion that is not to the greater advantage of him that uſes it, than any thing he can do in the *room* of it; any devotion that does not procure an *infinitely greater* good, than can be got by neglecting it, is yielded up.

But if people will live in ſo *much ignorance*, as never to put theſe queſtions to themſelves, but puſh on a blind life at all chances, in queſt of they don't know what, or why; without ever conſidering the worth, or value, or tendency of their actions; without conſidering what God, *reaſon*, *eternity*, and their own happineſs requires of them: it is for the honour of devotion that none can neglect it, but thoſe who are thus inconſiderate, who dare not enquire after that which is the beſt and moſt worthy of their choice.

4. * It

4.* It is true, *Claudius*, you are a man of *figure* and *eſtate*, and are to act the part of ſuch a ſtation in life; you are not called, as *Elijah* was, to be a prophet, or as St. *Paul*, to be an apoſtle.

But will you therefore not love yourſelf? Will you not ſeek and ſtudy your own happineſs?

You would think it very abſurd for a man not to value his own *health*, becauſe he was not a *phyſician*; or the preſervation of his *limbs*, becauſe he was not a *bone-ſetter*: yet it is more abſurd for you, *Claudius*, to neglect the improvement of your ſoul, becauſe you are not an apoſtle, or a biſhop.

* Conſider, *we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. Now, if your *eſtate* would excuſe you from appearing before this judgment-ſeat; if your *figure* could protect you from receiving according to your works, there would be ſome pretence for your leaving devotion to other people: but if you, who are now thus diſtinguiſhed, muſt then appear *naked* amongſt *common ſouls*, without any other diſtinction from others, but ſuch as your virtues or ſins give you, does it not as much concern you, as any *prophet*, or *apoſtle*, to make the beſt proviſion for that great day?

Conſider the words of St. *Peter*, *As he which*

hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation, 1 Pet. i. 15.

If therefore, *Claudius*, you are one of thoſe here called, you ſee what it is that you are called to. It is not to have ſo much religion as ſuits with your temper, your buſineſs, or your pleaſures; it is not a particular ſort of piety, that may be ſufficient for gentlemen of figure and eſtates; but it is, *firſt*, to be *holy, as he which hath called you is holy*; *ſecondly*, it is to be *thus holy* in all manner of converſation; that is, to carry this ſpirit and degree of holineſs into every part, and through the whole form of your life.

And the reaſon the apoſtle immediately gives, why this ſpirit of holineſs muſt be the common ſpirit of Chriſtians, as ſuch, is very affecting, and ſuch as equally calls upon all ſorts of Chriſtians. *Foraſmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation,—but with the precious blood of Chriſt.*

As if he had ſaid, foraſmuch as ye know ye were made capable of this ſtate of holineſs, entered into a ſociety with Chriſt, and made heirs of his glory, not by any human means, but by ſuch a myſterious inſtance of love, as infinitely exceeds every thing that can be thought of in this world; ſince God has redeemed you to himſelf, and your own happineſs, at ſo *great a price*, how baſe and ſhameful muſt it be, if you don't henceforth devote yourſelves wholly

to

to the glory of God, and become holy as he who hath called you is holy?

5. Again, the apoſtle ſaith, *Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt which is in you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify* God *in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are* God's, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

How poorly therefore, *Claudius*, have you read the ſcripture? How little do you know of Chriſtianity, if you can talk of your *eſtate* and *condition*, as a pretence for a freer kind of life?

Are you any more *your own*, than he that has no eſtate or dignity in the world? Muſt *mean* and *little* people preſerve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghoſt, by *watching; faſting*, and *prayer*; but may you indulge yours in *idleneſs*, in *luſts*, and *ſenſuality*, becauſe you have ſo much *rent*, or ſuch a *title* of diſtinction?

And you muſt either think thus, or elſe acknowledge that the holineſs of *ſaints*, *prophets*, and *apoſtles*, is the holineſs that you are to labour after with all diligence and care.

And if you leave it to others, to live in ſuch piety and devotion, in ſuch ſelf-denial, humility, and temperance, as may render them able to glorify God in their body, and in their ſpirit; you muſt leave it to them alſo, to have the benefit of the blood of Chriſt.

6. Thus

6. Thus much being ſaid to ſhew, that *great devotion* is not to be left to any particular ſort of people, but to be the *common ſpirit* of all Chriſtians; I now proceed to conſider the nature of *univerſal love*, which is here recommended to be the ſubject of your devotion at this hour.

By interceſſion is meant a praying to God, in behalf of our fellow-creatures.

Our bleſſed Lord hath recommended his love to us, as the pattern of our love to one another. As therefore he is continually making interceſſion for us all, ſo ought we to intercede for one another.

A new commandment, ſaith he, *I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye love one another.*

The newneſs of this precept did not conſiſt in this, that men were commanded to love one another; for this was an old precept, both of the law of *Moſes*, and of nature. But it was new in this reſpect, that it was to imitate a new, and, till then, unheard-of example of love; it was to love one another, as Chriſt had loved us.

And if men are to know that we are diſciples of Chriſt, by our loving one another, according to his example; then, if we are void of this love, we make it plainly known we are none of his diſciples.

7. There

7. There is no principle more acceptable to God, than an *univerſal* fervent love to all mankind, *wiſhing* and *praying* for their happineſs; becauſe there is no principle that makes us more like God, who is love and goodneſs itſelf, and created all beings for the enjoyment of happineſs.

The greateſt *idea* that we can frame of God is, a being of infinite love and goodneſs; uſing infinite wiſdom and power for the common good and happineſs of all his creatures.

The higheſt notion therefore that we can form of man is, when we conceive him as like God in this reſpect as he can be; uſing all his finite faculties, whether of wiſdom, power, or prayers, for the common good of all his fellow-creatures: heartily deſiring they may have all the happineſs they are capable of, and as many aſſiſtances from him, as his condition in the world will permit him to give them.

And, on the other hand, what a *baſeneſs* and *iniquity* is there in all inſtances of *hatred*, *envy*, *ſpite* and *ill will*; if we conſider, that every inſtance of them, is ſo far acting in *oppoſition* to God, and intending *miſchief* and *harm* to thoſe creatures, which God *favours*, and *protects*, and *preſerves*, in order to their happineſs? An *ill-natured* man amongſt God's creatures, is the moſt *perverſe* creature in the world, acting contrary to that *love*, by which himſelf *ſubſiſts*, and

which

which alone gives ſubſiſtence to all that variety of beings, that enjoy life in any part of the creation.

8. *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them.*

Now, though this is a doctrine of *ſtrict juſtice*, yet it is only an *univerſal love* that can comply with it.

As we have no degrees of ſpite or ill-will to ourſelves, ſo we cannot be diſpoſed towards others as we are towards ourſelves, till we *univerſally* renounce all inſtances of ſpite and ill-will, even in the *ſmalleſt* degrees.

If we had any imperfection in our *eyes*, that made us ſee *any one* thing wrong, for the ſame reaſon they would ſhew us an hundred things wrong.

So if we have any temper of our hearts, that makes us ſpiteful, or ill-natured towards *any one* man, the ſame temper will make us envious, and ſpiteful, and ill-natured towards a great many more.

If therefore we deſire this love, we muſt exerciſe our hearts in the love of *all*, becauſe it is not *Chriſtian* love, till it is the love of *all*.

If a man could keep this whole law of love, and yet offend in *one point*, he would be guilty of all. For as one allowed inſtance of injuſtice deſtroys the juſtice of all our other actions; ſo one allowed

ed inſtance of envy, ſpite, or ill-will, renders all our other acts of affection nothing worth.

Acts of love, that proceed not from a principle of *univerſal love*, are but like acts of juſtice, that proceed from a heart not diſpoſed to *univerſal juſtice.*

9. Now, the nobleſt motive to univerſal tenderneſs is this, *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.*

Who therefore, whoſe heart has any tendency towards God, would not aſpire after this divine temper.

How ſhould we rejoice in the exerciſe of this love, which, is an aſſurance to us, that we act according to his Spirit, who is love itſelf?

God willeth the happineſs of all beings, though it is no happineſs to himſelf; therefore we muſt deſire the happineſs of all beings, tho' no happineſs cometh to us from it.

God equally delighteth in the perfections of all his creatures; therefore we ſhould rejoice in thoſe perfections wherever we ſee them, and be as glad to have other people perfect as ourſelves.

10. * God, beſides his own great example of love, which ought to draw all his creatures after it, has ſo provided for us, and made our happineſs ſo *common* to us all, that we have no occaſion to envy or hate one another.

For we cannot ſtand in one another's way; or by enjoying our true good, keep another from his full ſhare of it.

As

As we cannot be happy, but in the enjoyment of God; so we cannot rob one another of this happiness.

And as to other things, the *enjoyments* of this life, they are so little in themselves, so foreign to our happiness; and generally speaking, so *contrary* to that which they appear to be, that they are no foundation for envy, or hatred.

How silly would it be to envy a man, that was drinking poison out of a *golden* cup? And yet who can say, that he is acting wiser than thus, when he is envying any instance of worldly greatness?

11. * How many *saints* has adversity sent to heaven? And how many sinners has prosperity plunged into everlasting misery? A man seems to be in the most glorious state, when he has conquered, disgraced, and humbled his enemy; though it may be, that same conquest has saved his adversary, and undone himself.

This man had perhaps never been debauched, but for his *fortune* and *advancement*; *that* had never been pious, but thro' his *poverty* and *disgrace*.

She that is envied for her beauty, may, perchance, owe all her *misery* to it; and another may be for ever happy, for having had no admirers of her *person*.

One man succeeds in every thing, and so loses all: *another* meets with nothing but crosses and disap-

disappointments, and thereby gains more than all the world is worth.

This *clergyman* may be undone by his being made a *bishop*; and *that* may save both himself and others by being fixed to his *poor vicarage*.

How envied was *Alexander*, when conquering the world, he built *towns*, set up his *statues*, and left marks of his glory in so many kingdoms!

And how despised was the poor preacher St. *Paul* when he was *beaten with rods!* And yet how strangely was the world mistaken in their judgment! How much to be envied was St. *Paul!* How much to be pitied was *Alexander!*

These few reflections shew, that the different conditions of this life have nothing in them to excite our uneasy passions, nothing that can reasonably interrupt our love and affection to one another.

12. To proceed now to another motive to this *universal* love.

Our power of doing *external acts* of love, is often very narrow and restrained. There are, it may be, but few people to whom we can contribute any worldly relief.

But tho' our outward means of doing good are often thus limited, yet, if our hearts are full of love, we get, as it were, an infinite power; because God will attribute to us those good works, which we would have performed, had it been in our power.

You

You cannot heal all the *ſick*, relieve all the *poor*; you cannot comfort all in diſtreſs, nor be a father to all the fatherleſs. You cannot, it may be, deliver many from their misfortunes, or teach them to find comfort in God.

* But if there is a love in your heart, that *excites* you to do *all* that you can; if your love has *no bounds*, but continually *wiſhes* and *prays* for the relief of all that are in diſtreſs, you will be received by God as a benefactor to thoſe, who had nothing from you but your *good-will*, and tender affections.

You cannot build *hoſpitals* for the *incurable*; but if you join in your heart with thoſe that do; if you are a friend to theſe great friends to mankind, and rejoice in their eminent virtues, you will be received by God as a ſharer of ſuch good works, as tho' they had none of your *hands*, yet had *all* your *heart*.

This conſideration ſurely is ſufficient to make us watch over our hearts with all diligence: and aſpire after the height of a loving, charitable, and benevolent mind.

13. And, on the other hand, we may hence learn the great evil of *envy*, *ſpite*, *hatred*, and *ill-will*. For if the goodneſs of our hearts will intitle us to the reward of good actions, which we never performed; it is certain that the badneſs of our hearts, will bring us under the guilt of actions that we have never committed.

* As

* As he that lufteth after a woman ſhall be reckoned an adulterer, tho' he has only committed the crime in his heart; ſo the malicious, ſpiteful, ill-natured man, that only *ſecretly* rejoices at evil, ſhall be reckoned a *murderer*, tho' he has ſhed no blood.

* Since therefore our hearts, which are always naked and open to the eyes of God, give ſuch an exceeding extent and increaſe, either to our virtues or vices, it is our *greateſt* buſineſs to govern the motions of our hearts, to correct and improve the inward ſtate of our ſouls.

14. Now there is nothing that ſo much exalts our ſouls, as this heavenly love; it cleanſes and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. By love, I don't mean any *natural tenderneſs*, which is more or leſs in people, according to their conſtitutions; but a *larger principle* of the ſoul, which makes us kind to all our fellow-creatures, as creatures of God, and for his ſake.

It is this love that loves all things in God, as his creatures, as the images of his power, as the creatures of his goodneſs, as parts of his family, as members of his ſociety, that becomes a holy principle of all great and good actions.

Theſe reaſons ſufficiently ſhew, that no love is *holy*, or *religious*, till it becomes *univerſal*.

For if religion requires me to love all perſons, as God's creatures, that belong to him, that bear his image, enjoy his protection, and make parts of

of his family and houſhold; if theſe are the great reaſons why I ſhould live in love with any one man in the world, they are the ſame great reaſons why I ſhould live in love with every man in the world; and conſequently, I offend againſt *all theſe reaſons*, whenever I want love towards any one man. The ſin therefore of hating or deſpiſing any one man, is like the ſin of hating all God's creation; and the neceſſity of loving any one man, is the ſame neceſſity of loving every man in the world. And tho' many people may appear to us ever ſo ſinful, odious, or extravagant in their conduct, we muſt never look upon that as the leaſt motive for any contempt or diſregard of them; but look upon them with the greater compaſſion, as being in the moſt pitiable condition that can be.

15. * As it was the ſins of the world, that made the Son of God become a compaſſionate ſuffering Advocate for all mankind; ſo no one is of the Spirit of Chriſt, but he that has the *utmoſt compaſſion* for ſinners. And you have never leſs reaſon to be pleaſed with yourſelf, than when you find yourſelf moſt offended at the behaviour of others. All ſin is certainly to be hated; but then, we muſt ſet ourſelves againſt ſin, as we do againſt *ſickneſs* and *diſeaſes*, by ſhewing ourſelves tender and compaſſionate to the *ſick* and *diſeaſed*.

* All other hatred of ſin, which does not fill the heart with the *ſofteſt*, *tendereſt* affections towards

wards perſons miſerable in it, it is the ſervant of ſin at the ſame time that it ſeems to be hating it.

And there is no temper which even good men ought more carefully to guard againſt than this. For it is a temper that lurks under the cover of many virtues, and by being unſuſpected does the more miſchief.

A man naturally fancies, that it is his own love of virtue that makes him not able to bear with thoſe that want it; and when he *abhors* one man, *deſpiſes* another, and can't bear the *name* of a third, he ſuppoſes it all to be a proof of his own *high ſenſe* of virtue, and *juſt hatred* of ſin.

And yet one would think that a man needed no other cure for this temper, than this one reflection:

That if this had been the *ſpirit* of the Son of God, if he had hated ſin in *this manner*, there had been no redemption of the world: if God had hated ſinners in this manner, the world itſelf had ceaſed long ago.

This therefore we may take for a certain rule, that the more we partake of the divine nature, and the higher our ſenſe of virtue is, the more we ſhall compaſſionate thoſe that want it. The ſight of ſuch people will then, inſtead of raiſing in us a haughty contempt, or peeviſh indignation towards them, fill us with ſuch bowels of compaſſion, as when we ſee the miſeries of an *hoſpital*.

16. That

16. That the follies therefore, and ill-behaviour of our fellow creatures, may not leſſen that love which we are to have for all mankind, we ſhould often conſider the reaſons on which this duty of love is founded.

Now we are to love our neighbour, that is, all mankind, not becauſe they are wiſe, holy or virtuous; for all mankind never was, nor ever will be ſo.

Again, if their goodneſs were the reaſon of our being obliged to love people, we ſhould have no *rule* to proceed by; becauſe tho' ſome people's virtues or vices are notorious, yet, generally ſpeaking, we are but ill judges of the virtue of other people.

Thirdly, We are ſure that the virtue of perſons, is not the reaſon of our being obliged to love them, becauſe we are commanded to pay the higheſt inſtances of love to our worſt enemies; we are to love, and bleſs, and pray for thoſe that moſt injuriouſly treat us. This therefore is demonſtration, that the merit of perſons is not the reaſon on which our obligation to love them is founded.

Let us farther conſider what that love is which we owe to our neighbour; it is to love him as ourſelves, that is, to wiſh him every thing that we may lawfully wiſh to ourſelves; to be glad of every good, and ſorry for every evil that happens to him: and ſo be ready to do him all ſuch acts

acts of kindneſs, as we are always ready to do ourſelves.

This love therefore, you ſee, is nothing but a love of *benevolence*; it requires nothing of us, but *good wiſhes*, *tender affections*, and ſuch acts of kindneſs, as we ſhew to ourſelves.

17. Now we are obliged to this love, in imitation of God's goodneſs, that we may be children of our Father which is in heaven, who willeth the happineſs of all his creatures, and maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good.

Again, our redemption, by Jeſus Chriſt, calleth us to the exerciſe of this love, who came from heaven, and laid down his life, out of love to the whole ſinful world.

Laſtly, Our Lord and Saviour has required us to love one another, as he loved us.

Theſe are the great, perpetual reaſons, on which our obligation to love all mankind as ourſelves is founded.

Theſe reaſons never vary; they always continue in their full force; and therefore equally oblige at all times, and in regard to all perſons.

God loves us, not becauſe we are wiſe, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, becauſe we want this happineſs. He loves us, in order to make us good. Our love therefore muſt take this courſe; not looking for, or requiring the merit of our brethren, but pitying their diſorders, and wiſhing them all the good that they want, and are capable of receiving.

18. You will perhaps aſk, if you are not to have a *particular eſteem* for good men? Yes; but this *eſteem* is very different from that love of *benevolence* which we owe to our neighbour.

The diſtinction betwixt love of benevolence, and eſteem, is plain and obvious.

No man is to have a *high eſteem* for his own accompliſhments or behaviour; yet every man is to love himſelf, that is, to wiſh well to himſelf; therefore this diſtinction betwixt love and eſteem, is not only plain, but very neceſſary to be obſerved.

Again, if you think it hardly poſſible to diſlike the actions of unreaſonable men, and yet have a true love for them, conſider this with relation to yourſelf.

It is very poſſible, for you not only to diſlike, but to *deteſt* and *abhor* a great many of your own paſt actions. But do you then loſe any of thoſe tender ſentiments towards yourſelf, which you uſed to have? Do you then ceaſe to wiſh well to yourſelf? Is not the love of yourſelf as ſtrong then as at any other time?

Now what is thus poſſible with relation to ourſelves, is poſſible with relation to others. We may have the higheſt good wiſhes towards them, deſiring for them every good that we deſire for ourſelves, and yet at the ſame time diſlike their way of life.

19. To

19. To conclude, all that love which we may juſtly have for ourſelves, we are in *ſtrict juſtice* obliged to exerciſe towards all other men; and we offend againſt the great law of our nature, when our tempers towards others are different from thoſe which we have towards ourſelves.

Now that *ſelf-love* which is *juſt* and *reaſonable*, keeps us conſtantly *tender*, *compaſſionate*, and *well-affected* towards ourſelves. If therefore you don't feel theſe kind diſpoſitions towards all other people, you may be aſſured, that you are not in that ſtate of charity, which is the very life and ſoul of Chriſtian piety.

You know how it hurts you, to be made the *jeſt* and *ridicule* of other people; how it grieves you to be *robbed* of your reputation: if therefore you expoſe others to *ſcorn* and *contempt* in *any* degree; if it pleaſes you to ſee or hear of their *frailties* and *infirmities*; or if you are only *loth* to conceal their faults, you are ſo far from loving ſuch people as yourſelf, that you may be juſtly ſuppoſed to have as much hatred for them, as you have love for yourſelf. For ſuch tempers are as truly the proper fruits of hatred, as the contrary tempers are the proper fruits of love.

And as it is a certain ſign that you love yourſelf, becauſe you are tender of every thing that concerns you; ſo it is as certain a ſign that you hate your neighbour, when you are pleaſed with any thing that hurts him.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the neceſſity and benefit of interceſſion, *conſidered as an exerciſe of univerſal love. How all orders of men are to interceed with God for one another. How ſuch interceſſion amends and reforms the heart.*

1. THAT interceſſion is a great and neceſſary part of Chriſtian devotion, is very evident from ſcripture.

The firſt followers of Chriſt ſeem to ſupport all their love, by prayers for one another.

St. *Paul*, whether he writes to churches, or particular perſons, ſhews that they are the conſtant ſubject of his prayers.

Thus to the *Philippians*, *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you: always in every prayer of mine for you all, making requeſt with joy*, Phil. i. 4, 5.

His devotion had alſo the ſame care for particular perſons, as appears by the following paſſage: *I thank my God, whom I ſerve from my forefathers, with a pure conſcience, that, without ceaſing, I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day*, 2 Tim. i. 3. How holy an acquaintance and friendſhip was this, how worthy of perſons that were raiſed above the world, and related

lated to one another, as new members of a kingdom of heaven!

2. Apoſtles and great ſaints did not only thus bleſs particular churches, and private perſons; but they themſelves alſo received graces from God by the prayers of others. Thus ſaith St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *You alſo helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift beſtowed upon us by the means of many perſons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf*, 2 Cor. i. 11.

This was the *ancient friendſhip* of Chriſtians, uniting and cementing their hearts, not by worldly conſiderations, or human paſſions, but by the mutual communication of ſpiritual bleſſings, by prayers and thankſgivings to God for one another.

It was this holy interceſſion that raiſed Chriſtians to ſuch a ſtate of mutual love, as far exceeded all that had been admired in human friendſhip. And when the ſame ſpirit of interceſſion is again in the world, this holy friendſhip will be again in faſhion, and Chriſtians will be again the wonder of the world, for that exceeding love which they bear to one another.

For a *frequent* interceſſion with God, earneſtly beſeeching him to forgive the ſins of all mankind, to bleſs them with his providence, enlighten them with his Spirit, and bring them to everlaſting happineſs, is the divineſt exercife that the heart of man can be engaged in.

3. Be daily therefore on your knees in a ſolemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others with ſuch *length*, *importunity*, and *earneſtneſs*, as you uſe for yourſelf; and you will find all *little*, *ill-natured* paſſions die away; and your heart will delight in the common happineſs of others, as you uſed only to delight in your own.

For it is hardly poſſible for you to beſeech God to make any one happy in his glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to ſee him enjoy the much ſmaller gifts of God in this life.

But the greateſt benefits of interceſſion are then received, when it deſcends to ſuch *particular* inſtances as our *ſtate* and *condition* in life more particularly require of us.

Tho' we are to treat all mankind as *neighbour* and *brethren*, as occaſion offers; yet as we can only live in the actual ſociety of a few, and are more particularly *related* to ſome than others; ſo when our interceſſion is made an exerciſe of love and care for thoſe amongſt whom our *lot* is fallen, or who belong to us in a *nearer relation*, it then becomes the greateſt benefit to ourſelves.

If therefore you ſhould always alter your interceſſions, according as the *needs* of your *neighbours* or *acquaintance* require; beſeeching God to deliver them from ſuch or ſuch particular evils, or to grant them this or that particular gift, or bleſſing; ſuch interceſſions, beſides the great

great charity of them, would have a mighty effect upon your own heart.

4. This would make it pleasant to you to be *courteous*, *civil*, and *condescending* to all about you, and make you unable to say or do a rude or hard thing to those for whom you had used yourself to be so kind and compassionate in your prayers.

* For there is nothing that makes us love a man so much, as praying for him; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of every thing that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generosity and tenderness, that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour, than any thing that is called *fine breeding* and *good manners*.

By considering yourself as an advocate with God for your neighbours and acquaintance, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy to you to bear with, and forgive those, for whom you particularly implored the divine mercy and forgiveness.

Such prayers as these amongst *neighbours* and *acquaintance*, would unite them to one another in the strongest bonds of love and tenderness. It would teach them to consider one another in a higher state, as members of a *spiritual society*, that are created for the enjoyment of the com-

mon bleſſings of God, and fellow heirs of the ſame glory.

And by being thus deſirous that every one ſhould have their full ſhare of the favours of God, they would be glad to ſee one another happy in the little enjoyments of this life.

5. * *Ouranius* is a holy prieſt, full of the ſpirit of the goſpel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor *country village*. Every ſoul in it is as dear to him as himſelf; and he loves them all, as he loves himſelf, becauſe he *prays* for them all, as often as he prays for himſelf.

If his whole life is one continual exerciſe of great zeal and labour, hardly ever ſatisfied with any degrees of care and watchfulneſs, 'tis becauſe he has learned the great value of ſouls, by ſo often appearing before God as an *interceſſor* for them.

He never thinks he can love, or do enough for his flock; becauſe he never conſiders them in any other view, than as ſo many perſons, that, by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his *hope*, his *joy*, and his *crown of rejoicing*.

He goes about his pariſh, and viſits every body in it; but viſits in the ſame ſpirit of piety that he preaches to them: he viſits them to encourage their virtues, to aſſiſt them with his advice, to diſcover their manner of life, and to know the ſtate of their ſouls, that he may *interceed* with

with God for them, according to their *particular neceſſities*.

6. When *Ouranius* firſt entered into holy orders, he had a *haughtineſs* in his temper, a great *contempt* for all fooliſh and unreaſonable people: but he has *prayed away* this ſpirit, and has now the greateſt tenderneſs for the moſt obſtinate ſinners; becauſe he is always hoping, that God will ſooner or later hear thoſe *prayers* that he makes for their repentance.

The *rudeneſs*, *ill-nature*, or *perverſe* behaviour of any of his flock, uſed at firſt to betray him into impatience; but it now raiſes no other paſſion in him, than a deſire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

Thus have his *prayers* for others *altered* and *amended* the ſtate of his own heart.

It would delight you to ſee with what *ſpirit* he converſes, with what *tenderneſs* he reproves, with what *affection* he exhorts, and with what *vigour* he preaches; and 'tis all owing to this, becauſe he reproves, exhorts, and preaches to thoſe, for whom he firſt *prays* to God.

This devotion ſoftens his heart, enlightens his mind, ſweetens his temper, and makes every thing that comes from him, inſtructive, amiable and affecting.

7. At his firſt coming to this little *village*, it was as diſagreeable to him as a *priſon*, and every day ſeemed too tedious to be endured in ſo retired a place. He thought his pariſh

was too full of *poor* and *mean* people, that were none of them fit for the converſation of a *gentleman*.

This put him upon a cloſe application to his ſtudies. He kept much at home, writ *notes* upon *Homer* and *Plautus*, and ſometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was juſt in the midſt of one of *Homer's battles*.

This was his *polite*, or I may rather ſay, *poor*, *ignorant* turn of mind, before devotion had got the government of his heart.

But now his days are ſo far from being tedious, or his pariſh too great a retirement, that he only wants more time to do that variety of good which his ſoul thirſts after. The ſolitude of his little pariſh is become matter of great comfort to him, becauſe he hopes that God has placed him and his flock there, to make it their way to heaven.

He can now not only converſe with, but gladly *wait* upon the pooreſt kind of people. He is now daily watching over the *weak*, humbling himſelf to perverſe, rude, ignorant people, wherever he can find them; and is ſo far from deſiring to be conſidered as a *gentleman*, that he deſires to be uſed as the *ſervant* of all; and in the Spirit of his Lord and Maſter *girds himſelf*, and is glad to *kneel down* and *waſh* any of their *feet*.

He now thinks the pooreſt creature in his pa-

riſh

riſh good enough, and great enough, to deſerve the humbleſt attendances, the kindeſt friendſhips, the tendereſt offices, he can poſſibly ſhew them.

He is ſo far now from wanting agreeable company, that he thinks there is no better converſation in the world, than to be talking with *poor* and *mean* people about the kingdom of heaven.

All theſe noble thoughts and divine ſentiments are the effects of his great devotion; he preſents every one ſo often before God in his prayers, that he never thinks he can *eſteem*, or ſerve thoſe enough, for whom he implores ſo many mercies from God.

8. *Ouranius* is mightily affected with this paſſage of holy ſcripture, *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*, James v. 16.

This makes him practiſe all the arts of holy living, and aſpire after every inſtance of piety, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force, and avail much with God.

For this reaſon he has ſold a ſmall eſtate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for ancient, poor people, to live in prayer and piety; that his prayers, being aſſiſted by ſuch good works, may *pierce the clouds*, and bring down bleſſings upon thoſe ſouls committed to his care.

9. *Ouranius* reads how God himſelf ſaid unto

Abimelech concerning *Abraham: He is a prophet; he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live,* Gen. xx. 7.

And again, how he ſaid of *Job: And my ſervant Job ſhall pray for you; for him will I accept,* Job xlii. 8.

From theſe paſſages *Ouranius* juſtly concludes, that the prayers of men eminent for holineſs, have an extraordinary power with God; that he grants to other people ſuch bleſſings, through their prayers, as would not be granted to men of leſs piety. This makes *Ouranius* exceeding ſtudious of Chriſtian perfection, ſearching after every grace and holy temper, fearful of every error and defect in his life, leſt his prayers for his flock ſhould be leſs availing with God.

This makes him careful of every *temper* of his heart, give *alms* of all that he hath, *watch*, and *faſt*, and *mortify*, and live according to the ſtricteſt rules of *temperance*, *meekneſs* and *humility*, that he may be in ſome degree like an *Abraham*, or a *Job*, in his pariſh, and make ſuch prayers for them as God will hear and accept.

Theſe are the happy effects which a *devout interceſſion* hath produced in the life of *Ouranius*.

And if other people in their ſeveral ſtations, were to imitate his example, in ſuch a manner as ſuited their particular ſtate of life, they would certainly find the ſame happy effects from it.

10. * If

10. * If *maſters*, for inſtance, were to remember their *ſervants* in their prayers, beſeeching God to bleſs them, and ſuiting their petitions to the particular wants of their ſervants; letting no day paſs, without a *full performance* of this part of devotion; the benefit would be as great to themſelves as to their ſervants.

No way ſo likely as this, to inſpire them with a true ſenſe of that power which they have in their hands, to make them delight in doing good, and become exemplary in all the parts of a wiſe and good maſter.

* The preſenting their ſervants ſo often before God, as equally related to God, and intitled to the ſame heaven as themſelves, would incline them to treat them not only with ſuch *humanity* as became *fellow-creatures*, but with ſuch *tenderneſs*, *care*, and *generoſity*, as became *fellow-heirs* of the ſame glory. This devotion would make maſters inclined to every thing that was good towards their ſervants; be watchful of their behaviour, and as ready to require of them an exact obſervance of the duties of Chriſtianity as of the duties of their ſervice.

* This would teach them to conſider their ſervants as God's ſervants, to deſire their perfection, to do nothing before them that might corrupt their minds, to impoſe no buſineſs upon them that ſhould leſſen their ſenſe of religion, or hinder them from their full ſhare of devotion, both public and private. This praying for them, would

would make them as glad to ſee their ſervants eminent in piety as themſelves, and contrive that they ſhould have all opportunities and encouragements, both to know and perform all the duties of the Chriſtian life.

11. How natural would it be for ſuch a maſter, to perform every part of family devotion; to have conſtant prayers; to excuſe no one's abſence from them; to have the ſcriptures, and books of piety, often read among his ſervants; take all opportunities of inſtructing them, of raiſing their minds to God, and teaching them to do all their buſineſs, as a ſervice to God, and upon the hopes and expectations of another life?

* How natural would it be for ſuch a one to pity their weakneſs and ignorance, to bear with the dulneſs of their underſtandings, or the perverſeneſs of their tempers; to reprove them with tenderneſs, exhort them with affection, as hoping that God would hear his prayers for them?

How impoſſible would it be for a maſter, that thus interceeded with God for his ſervants, to uſe any unkind threatenings towards them, to damn and curſe them as *dogs* and ſcoundrels, and treat them only as dregs of the creation?

This devotion would give them another ſpirit, and make them conſider how to make proper returns of care, kindneſs, and protection to thoſe, who

who had ſpent their ſtrength and time in ſervice and attendance upon them.

12. Now if *gentlemen* think it too low an employment to exerciſe ſuch a devotion as this for their *ſervants*, let them conſider how far they are from the ſpirit of Chriſt, who made himſelf not only an interceſſor, but a ſacrifice for the whole race of ſinful mankind?

Let them conſider how miſerable their greatneſs would be, if the Son of God ſhould think it as much below him to pray for them, as they do to pray for their fellow-creatures?

Let them conſider how far they are from that ſpirit, which prays for its moſt unjuſt enemies, if they have not kindneſs enough to pray for thoſe, by whoſe labours and ſervice they live in eaſe themſelves.

13. Again: If parents ſhould thus make themſelves *advocates* and *interceſſors* with God for their children, conſtantly applying to heaven in behalf of them, nothing would be more likely, not only to bleſs their children, but alſo to diſpoſe their own minds to the performance of every thing that was excellent and praiſe-worthy.

I don't ſuppoſe, but that the generality of parents remember their children in their prayers. * But the thing here intended is not a general remembrance of them, but a *regular method* of recommending all their *particular needs* unto God; and of praying for every ſuch particular *grace* and *virtue* for them as their *ſtate* and *condition* of life ſhall ſeem to require. The

The ſtate of parents is a holy ſtate, in ſome degree like that of the prieſthood, and calls upon them to bleſs their children with their prayers and ſacrifices to God. Thus it was that holy *Job* watched over, and bleſſed his children, he *ſanctified them, he roſe up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all*, Job i. 5.

If parents therefore, conſidering themſelves in this light, ſhould be daily calling upon God in a *ſolemn, deliberate* manner, *altering* and *extending* their interceſſions, as the *ſtate* and *growth* of their children required, ſuch devotion would have a mighty influence upon the reſt of their lives; it would make them very circumſpect in the government of themſelves; prudent and careful of every thing they ſaid or did, leſt their example ſhould hinder that which they ſo conſtantly deſired in their prayers.

14. If a father was daily making particular prayers to God, that he would pleaſe to inſpire his children with *true piety*, *great humility*, and *ſtrict temperance*, what could be more likely to make the father himſelf become exemplary in theſe virtues? How naturally would he grow aſhamed of wanting ſuch virtues as he thought neceſſary for his children? So that his prayers for their piety, would be a certain means of exalting his own.

If a father thus conſidered himſelf as an interceſſor with God for his children, to bleſs them with

with his prayers, how would ſuch thoughts make him avoid every thing that was diſpleaſing to God, leſt when he prayed for his children, God ſhould reject his prayers?

* How tenderly, how religiouſly would ſuch a father converſe with his children, whom he conſidered as his little ſpiritual flock, whoſe virtues he was to form by his example, encourage by his authority, nouriſh by his counſel, and proſper by his prayers to God for them?

* How fearful would he be of all unjuſt ways of raiſing their fortune, of bringing them up in pride and indulgence, or of making them too fond of the world, leſt he ſhould thereby render them incapable of thoſe graces which he was ſo often beſeeching God to grant them?

15. *Laſtly*, If all people, when they feel the firſt approaches of *reſentment*, *envy*, or *contempt*, towards others; or if in all little diſagreements and miſunderſtandings whatever, they ſhould, inſtead of indulging their minds with little, low reflections, have recourſe to a more particular interceſſion with God, for ſuch perſons as had raiſed their envy, reſentment, or diſcontent; this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers.

If you was always to form your prayer at that time to the greateſt degree of *contrariety* to that temper which you was then in, it would be an excellent means of mending your heart.

As for inſtance: when at any time you find in

in your heart motions of *envy* towards any perſon, whether on account of his *riches*, *power*, *reputation*, *learning*, or *advancement*, if you ſhould immediately pray to God to bleſs and proſper him in that *very thing* which raiſed your envy; if you ſhould repeat your petitions in the ſtrongeſt terms, beſeeching God to grant him all the happineſs from the enjoyment of it that can poſſibly be received, you would ſoon find it to be the beſt antidote in the world, to expel the venom of that paſſion.

* *Again:* If in any little difference or miſunderſtandings that you happened to have at any time with a *relation*, a *neighbour*, or any one elſe, you ſhould then pray for them in a more *extraordinary manner* than you ever did before, beſeeching God to give them every grace and bleſſing you can think of, you would take the ſpeedieſt method of reconciling all differences, and clearing up all miſunderſtandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven, ſtay for no condeſcenſions, need no mediation of a third perſon, but be glad to teſtify your love and goodwill to him, who had ſo high a place in your ſecret prayers.

This would remove all peeviſh paſſions, ſoften your heart into the moſt tender condeſcenſions, and be the beſt arbitrator of all differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintance.

16. Hence we may alſo learn the odious nature

ture of all *ſpite*, *hatred*, *contempt*, and *angry paſſions*. They are not to be conſidered as defects in *good-nature*, not as failings in *civility* or *good breeding*, but as ſuch *baſe tempers* as are entirely inconſiſtent with the *charity* of interceſſion.

You think it a ſmall matter to be *peeviſh* or *ill-natured* to ſuch or ſuch a man; but you ſhould conſider, whether it be a ſmall matter to do that which you could not do, if you had but ſo much charity as to be able to recommend him to God in your prayers.

You think it a ſmall matter to *ridicule* one man, and *deſpiſe* another; but you ſhould conſider, whether it be a ſmall matter to want that charity towards theſe people which Chriſtians are not allowed to want towards their moſt inveterate enemies.

For, be but as charitable to theſe men, do but *bleſs* and *pray* for them, as you are obliged to bleſs and pray for your *enemies*, and then you will find that you have charity enough, to make it impoſſible for you to treat them with any degree of ſcorn or contempt.

For you cannot poſſibly deſpiſe and ridicule that man, whom your *private prayers* recommend to the love and favour of God.

When you deſpiſe and ridicule a man, it is with no other end but to make him ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of other men. How therefore can it be poſſible for you ſincerely to beſeech God to bleſs that man with the *honour*

of

of his love and favour, whom you desire men to treat as worthy of their contempt.

Could you, out of love to a neighbour, desire your *prince* to honour him with his esteem and favour, and yet at the same time expose him to the scorn and derision of your own servants.

Yet this is as possible, as to expose that man to the scorn and contempt of your fellow-creatures, whom you recommend to the favour of God in your secret prayers.

17. You cannot despise a brother, without despising him that stands in a *high relation* to God, to his Son Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Trinity.

You would certainly think it a mighty impiety to treat a *writing* with contempt, that had been written by the *finger* of God; and can you think it a less impiety to contemn a brother, who is not only the *workmanship*, but the *image* of God?

You would justly think it great prophaneness to condemn and trample upon an *altar*, because it was appropriated to holy uses, and had had the body of Christ so often placed upon it; and can you suppose it to be less prophaneness to scorn and trample upon a brother, who so belongs to God, that his very body is the *temple of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. vi. 15.

18. * But to return: *Intercession* is not only the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, all angry and

and haughty paſſions, but is alſo of great uſe to diſcover to us the true ſtate of our own hearts.

There are many tempers which we think *lawful* and *innocent*, which we never ſuſpect of any harm; which, if they were to be tried by this devotion, would ſoon ſhew us how we have deceived ourſelves.

* *Suſurrus* is a pious, temperate man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities. No one more conſtant at the ſervice of the church. His charity is ſo great, that he almoſt ſtarves himſelf, to be able to give greater alms to the poor.

19. Yet *Suſurrus* had a prodigious failing along with theſe great virtues.

He had a mighty inclination to hear and diſcover all the defects and infirmities of all about him. You was welcome to tell him any thing of any body, provided that you did not do it in the *ſtile* of an enemy. He never diſliked an *evil-ſpeaker*, but when his language was *rough* and *paſſionate*. If you would but whiſper any thing gently, tho' it was ever ſo bad, *Suſurrus* was ready to receive it.

When he viſits, you generally hear him relating, how ſorry he is for the failings of ſuch a neighbour. He is always letting you know how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour; how loth to ſay that which he is forced to ſay; and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be concealed.

Suſurrus

Sufurrus had ſuch a tender, compaſſionate manner of relating things the moſt prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even ſeemed, both to himſelf and others, to be exerciſing a Chriſtian charity, at the ſame time that he was indulging a whiſpering, evil-ſpeaking temper.

Sufurrus once whiſpered to a particular friend in great ſecrecy, ſomething too bad to be ſpoke of publickly. He ended with ſaying, how glad he was, that he had ſome hopes it might not be true, tho' the ſuſpicions were very ſtrong. His friend made him this reply:

You ſay, *Sufurrus*, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind; and that you have ſome hopes it may not prove true. Go home therefore to your *cloſet*, and pray to God for this man, in ſuch a manner, and with ſuch earneſtneſs as you would pray for yourſelf on the like occaſion.

Beſeech God to interpoſe in his favour, to ſave him from falſe accuſers, and bring all thoſe to ſhame, who, by *uncharitable whiſpers*, and *ſecret ſtories*, wound him, like thoſe that ſtab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer, then you may, if you pleaſe, go tell the ſame ſecret to ſome other friend, that you have told to me.

20. *Sufurrus* was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conſcience in as lively a manner, as if he had ſeen the *books opened* at the day of judgment.

All

All other arguments might have been reſiſted; but it was impoſſible for *Suſurrus* either to reject, or follow this advice, without being equally ſelf-condemned in the higheſt degree.

From that time to this, he has conſtantly uſed himſelf to this method of interceſſion; and his heart is ſo intirely changed by it, that he can now no more privately whiſper any thing to the prejudice of another, than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt.

Whiſperings and evil-ſpeakings now hurt his ears, like oaths and curſes; and he has appointed one day in the week, to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himſelf before God, in the forrowful confeſſion of his former guilt.

It may be well wondered, how a man of ſo much piety as *Suſurrus*, could be ſo deceived in himſelf, as to live in ſuch a ſtate of *ſcandal* and *evil-ſpeaking*, without ſuſpecting himſelf to be guilty of it. But it was the *tenderneſs* and ſeeming *compaſſion* with which he heard and related every thing, that deceived both himſelf and others.

This was a falſeneſs of heart, which was fully diſcovered, by the true charity of *interceſſion*.

And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themſelves, as *Suſurrus* did, were often to try their ſpirit by ſuch an *interceſſion*, they would often find themſelves to be ſuch, as they leaſt of all ſuſpected.

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